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ABSTRACT

This selection of conference papers on a national purpose for higher education in England begins with an analysis of the distribution of power in "Who Decides the Purposes?" Maurice Kogan argues for a "consumer council" formally representing students. The concept of "social purpose" is examined by Bill Weinstein in "Social Purposes in Search of Higher Education, or Higher Education in Search of Social Purposes?" Among current social purposes are the provision of trained manpower, the moral development of students, and the diagnosis and cure for social ills general to society. In commentary, Brian Pippard suggests that two particular sources of pressure that bring change in universities are shortage of money and the growing power of students. A second commentary on Weinstein's paper is made by David Gray who supports the position that there is a need for academics to act politically and enlarges on their function as critics of society. In "What Shall We Teach?" Marjorie Reeves describes the following five elements that should be found in all higher education: the art of communication; techniques of mastery; the enrichment of understanding and enjoyment of other human beings; a feeling for the miraculous; and the ordering assessment of personal experience. In the last paper, "An International View of Higher Education," Ladislav Cerych describes ways international comparisons can help clarify ideas on national purposes and makes favorable comparisons between Britain and the rest of Europe. (SW)

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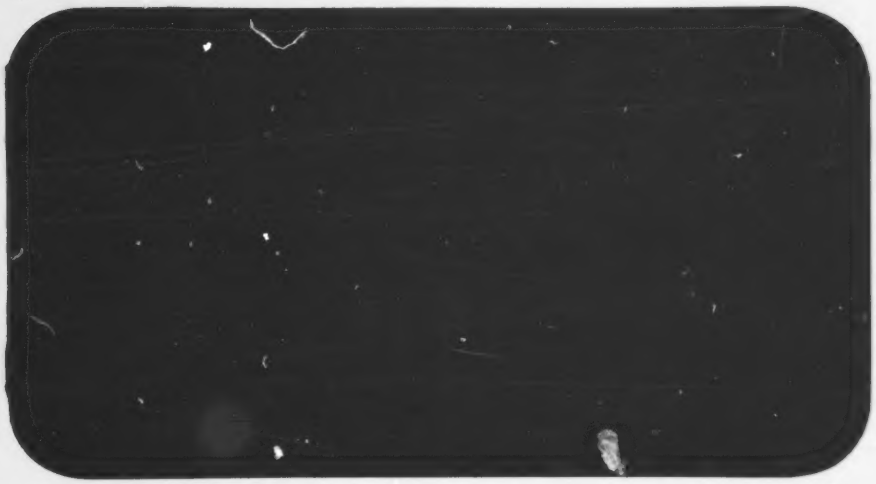

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A National Purpose for Higher Education

Papers from a conference organised by The Department of Higher Education, University of London Institute of Education and sponsored by The Joseph Rowntree Trust. Edited by David Warren Piper

75p

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PREFACE

These papers are selected from a conference entitled 'A National Purpose for Higher Education?' organised by the Department of Higher Education, University of London Institute of Education in March 1973. The venture was underwritten by the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust. Four papers and the chairman's introduction are reproduced here more or less in their original form. To these have been added two additional commentaries which in part cover some of the points made both in discussion and in the original conference papers which have not been included in this publication.

The selection begins with Professor Maurice Kogan with an analysis of the distribution of power from the Ministry to the Students Union: who decides the purposes of education and on what grounds. He describes a system in which there is a formal mechanism allowing academics to negotiate their freedom to create educational patterns within the prescriptions of cost and types of institutions laid down by central government. What is missing is a 'consumer council' formally representing the students: he argues that as universities provide a specialised service for its customers/students such a body would be a more appropriate vehicle for student power than a voice in university government.

This is followed by a tour de force from Bill Weinstein examining the concept of 'social purpose'. Issues of social purpose are inately complex he first claims and then demonstrates. His first step is to adumbrate difficulties in formulating coherent social purposes. He identifies a number of educational ideals currently under attack often as a direct result of a shift of emphasis in social purposes. He examines in detail some social purposes that are currently to the fore: the provision of trained manpower; the moral development of students; the diagnosis and cure for social ills general to society. He concludes that academics must become politically more active in order to fight for their necessary freedom to remain, at another level, apolitical.

That paper is followed by two comments upon it. The theme of Brian Pippard's paper is the sources of pressure that bring about change in universities in particular the shortage of money and the growing power of students. David Gray takes up Weinstein's point about the need for academics to act politically and enlarges on their function as critics of society.

The third major paper is entitled 'What Shall We Teach?' and Marjorie Reeves describes five elements which should be found in all higher education. They are: the art of communication, especially verbal; techniques of mastery; the enrichment of understanding and enjoyment

of other human beings; a feeling for the miraculous; the ordering and assessment of personal experience.

Finally, Ladislav Cerych casts a European eye over British higher education in a paper entitled 'An International View of Higher Education'. Having described the way in which international comparisons can help clarify ideas on national purposes, he makes largely favourable comparisons between Britain and the rest of Europe. He concludes that membership of the Common Market will result in very little pressure for industrial states to modify their education systems but where there is movement towards similarity the British system is likely to provide the favoured model.

David Warren Piper

The papers by Weinstein and Cerych have subsequently been printed in a slightly amended form in 'Higher Education', and we gratefully acknowledge the permission of the editor of this Journal, Professor Alec Ross, to reproduce them here.

Introduction

Professor W R Niblett

Why a conference on the purpose of higher education? Need higher education have any thought-out national, or indeed international, purposes? We seem to have got along so far without defining our objectives very clearly. Won't it continue to be OK if we ask the universities and now the polytechnics to produce the experts we think we need - making themselves as institutions as required?

I suggest that the time has come when such lack of reflection, such utilitarianism, is not enough. We still do not realise how quick the development of higher education in this country has been and the significance of the continued expansion which is inevitable if we are even to keep in sight of other countries which are expanding their higher education systems rapidly too.

Today in England and Wales, apart from the polytechnics and the Open University, there are 35 degree-granting universities with 200,000 full-time students. A hundred years ago, in 1873, there were still only four - with between them maybe 6000 full-time students reading for degrees. By that date, incidentally, no woman had ever been admitted to a degree in any of them. But now in 1973 it looks as if within 20 years or less we may have 800,000 students, full-time and part-time, in some 80 degree-granting places of higher education. The scale and the hastening rapidity of the development has been, and is continuing to be, dramatic.

Yet we are still extraordinarily dependent in this situation upon extrapolating the unwritten purposes for educating the 6000 full-time students of a century ago.

The paramount achievement of Oxford and Cambridge then was to turn out graduates quite a proportion of whom could be an elite - assured in their confidence, able to give leadership from the top, in politics, the civil service, the colonial empire, the squirearchy, the church, and possessed of a certain intellectual and moral integrity. The predominant purpose of London was to give the country graduates sound in their knowledge, able to make their contribution to industry, medicine, school teaching, and other professions, with an increasing proportion of the ablest seeing how important scientific and technological research was to the prosperity of a Britain which had to keep an eye on Germany and on America.

But now? Elitism in the old sense is out. We live in a plural society, growing more and more complicated, dependent to a frightening degree upon technology, not sure of our aims - though coming to suspect that after a certain point has been reached an endless proliferation of material goods won't be the answer. We live in a consumer age, in which the supply of gadgets and goodies, ice cream and happiness, must not be cut off. Progress is accelerating, we are going faster and faster into a Future spelt with a somewhat mystical capital F.

As it is envisaged by governments and White Papers the purpose of higher education is intelligently utilitarian. Polytechnics and universities are conceived as outward-looking and forward-looking places. And one of the advantages of the binary system is that if one sector proves to be difficult or uncooperative or backward-looking, more grants and more students car be shifted to the other.

I am not of course suggesting that universities or polytechnics can by themselves act as leaders or purpose bringers to a society unsure of itself or of its own direction. But I think that they need to be centres of reflection and of critical thought - as well as of "scholarship, research and inventiveness" to use the words of the White Paper. And this implies that in the content of courses they give they need deliberately to pay attention to contemplation as well as action, to nourishing imagination and encouraging a disciplined vision as well as analytic power.

To educate and produce 200,000 graduates a year within 25 years from now is going to demand a lot more consciousness of the how and the why than when - only a hundred years ago - England was a simpler world, whether more moral or less so, and when we produced 2000 only. Our problems are enormous: of objective, of curriculum, of the extent to which universities and polytechnics should be service-oriented. We look to this conference to look clearly at some of the problems which face us as teachers in universities and polytechnics; and provoke us to thought about how they may be solved.

Who Decides the Purposes?

Professor Maurice Kogan

The Conference is principally concerned with the purposes of higher education. My particular task is to ask the related question of 'Who decides the purposes?'.

In more detail, the questions to be considered are, 'who decides the national interest and on what grounds? In what terms is it appropriate to define national policy? To what degree should decision making be centralised? What is the nature of the relationship between decisions taken at the national and at the institutional or departmental levels?' I cannot attempt all of these points but will try to state the context in which the questions might be considered.

Decision making in higher education is difficult to analyse because of the range and fluidity of its objectives. It is not an essential service in the same sense as, say, the health service. There is no national need for undergraduate courses in themselves as there is a need to cope with diphtheria or to have our teeth fixed or to have an efficient sewerage system. It is not even needed to meet social prescription as are primary and secondary education which are mandatory. It is an optional extra although, of course, it contributes to activities which are not optional.

Because its purposes are volatile it is wide open to a large and fluctuating system of decision makers. On the whole, laymen do not expect to be party to arguments as between orthopaedics and physical medicine or general surgery although we may well become more involved in, say, mental health or geriatrics. Higher education is more open to argument.

The classic assumptions about the objectives of higher education reinforce my point. If we assume that the objectives are broadly those of meeting social demand, of meeting economic and manpower needs, and of meeting idiosyncratically educational objectives we also take up somewhat more basic assumptions of values. Thus in accepting social demand as a criterion, as every government has done since the Robbins Report, we in fact agree to fund processes which lead to individual self-determination and autonomy, greater freedom of life style including a wider choice of jobs for individuals. And social demand is, in fact, the imperative within which the second set of objectives, economic and manpower demands, find their place. But those objectives, too, carry with them valuations of the type of society which we try to build - as when the UGC lays emphasis on, say, the training of social workers, makes the tenth attempt in twenty years to do something about business studies, leads a shrinking away from the physical sciences and technology, and so on. The third set of objectives, which are very well treated in papers to follow this, are the independent 'educational' assumptions to which I want to refer later.

By pursuing the way in which these objectives find their place in national planning for higher education we also come to questions about the authority

structure of higher educational institutions. There is first the question of how far national planning affects the pursuit of these large scale objectives and there is, secondly, the extent to which educational institutions themselves help determine the emphases as between these objectives.

So now I come to a discussion of my main points. We have interlocking networks of decision making which determine the size, shape and nature of a higher education institution within the whole system. It is on the Department of Education and Science that the distribution of resources for all parts of the higher education system now depends. The UGC and local education authorities are powerful intermediary mechanisms which greatly determine the shape of the individual institutions. The overall pattern is determined by central government.

Secondly, the same centres of decision making largely determine institutional purposes as between teaching and research, applied as against more fundamental research, and as between different subject concentrations. The institutions themselves may veto changes, but the flow of resources represents a powerful set of prescriptions. So, for example, by cutting unit costs in the universities, the DES and UGC have given notice to teaching staff that if they want resources for research they must look to contractual relationships with those who might find research useful. By withholding a building, perhaps more than by withholding increases in recurrent monies, the UGC or the DES can strongly determine the balance between subjects in a university or a polytechnic.

Thirdly, and here we come to a very different set of considerations, we have the academic validation network. The prescriptive mechanisms are different and so are their purposes. For it is still true in this country that government is largely content to allow academics to work within the prescriptions laid down in favour of social and economic objectives by setting the content and quality of courses for themselves. These are determined in both sectors by interplay between the staff of the institutions themselves and their external validators - external examiners, the CNAA (which consists largely of academics) and so on.

It is within that zone of academic and educational discretion that academic freedom lies. And here I strongly disagree with the doyen of government studies, Max Beloff. No one affects the way he teaches at Oxford or what he teaches. We are all left to overwork in our own way. But all academics are affected by the resources made available to them. The prescriptive limits are those of overall balance as between subjects and the resources made available for their teaching rather than the content, style and standards. And I maintain that this is a decent way of creating a balance between social purpose and academic freedom.

Now this fairly obvious and traditional attribution of roles does not of itself answer the question of what the national purposes are, how they come to be generated, and what is the actual interplay between the central planners and those who provide higher education within the institutions.

And everything that we can say about relationships between different parts of the system is strongly affected by the single largest movement in policy in the last ten years. For while the quinquennial allocation has been very tight indeed, tight to the point that the universities find themselves unable to break away from some of their historic commitments, including

those resulting from the outburst of technological theology in the 1960s, and unable to promote new usefulnesses except by use of very marginal resources, the system as a whole is strongly committed to social demand. That is the assumption behind all of the planning figures even when the planning figures are on the mean side. And this acceptance is all the more surprising in view of quite searing pessimism about the usefulness of education. If we follow the economists we find no comfort in assuming that it is particularly helpful to the economy. And if we follow a vociferous minority of students we find a kind of neo-augustinianism which can see only evil in any welfare state institution.

But this emancipation from the manpower and economic arguments, which presents education as primarily a consumer good rather than an economic tool, opens a Pandora's box. Because, if we can argue that education is a good thing in itself, we are usually also arguing that the educators have a distinctive and authoritative place in the decision making process. If we argue that education is part of the machinery for economic growth, we, again, can say who are the main decision makers. But if we argue that the main objective is consumer satisfaction, and that can be the only reason why the UGC is sponsoring a vast expansion in social sciences, we have now to look for who are the consumers and what are the mechanisms through which their demands become policy. This brings us straight into the field of relationships between teachers and students, higher education institutions and the larger society.

In formal terms, we can detect collegiums of academics negotiating their freedom to create educational patterns within the prescriptions laid down by central government.

But now examine some of the assumptions that have been stated about the 'true' as opposed to the 'formal' structure. Does consumer demand incorporate, for example, the demands of employers of labour? This is the assumption which is often stated by members of the New Left, and appears, I would suspect, in most student newspapers as an irrefutable assumption. Personally, I do not myself see where and how industrialists are imposing patterns of curriculum. If this is true, I think all of us would be glad to see the evidence. Nor do I see at what point the public sector institutions are prescribing social science curriculum.

Indeed, in another field, it is a recurrent complaint of the school systems that they have too small a part in the control of teacher education. The whole burden of the Todd Report was that the medical schools were insufficiently geared to the work that medical practitioners need to do. Where, in fact, higher education institutions are more closely tied to the chariot wheels is in the seeking of contracts for research. But I have an odd suspicion that those who would worry most about prescription are not those who seek these contracts anyway and I have never myself seen any evidence that government departments or industry or business are giving those contracts in return for changes in curriculum.

The second somewhat uncharted area is the whole set of relationships between teachers and students. Who has the right within the institution to generate curriculum and assessment procedures? The legitimacy of what is being taught and of the processes through which teaching and assessment take place is challenged. Are we capable of presenting any system of concepts and techniques in a way that carries authority acceptable by the recipients? And if authoritative, can it also be authoritative without being authoritarian?

And here is clearly a point where relationships with the providers of funds need to be watched. For when the DES gives grants to universities or sanctions expansion programmes for these civic universities so quaintly called polytechnics, it is buying a very large chunk of the dialectical process. It is fostering sources of criticism of both scientific and social process. But it is now the potential critics. the academics, who are being criticised. And it is really enough to make one lose one's nerve. Sometimes we seem to be subjected to a heuristic process in which teachers are expected to learn new truths from each generation of undergraduates. This is, I assume, a convenient form of the permanent revolution. But even if one does not accept the assumptions of somewhat untried undergraduates that most British higher education curriculum is rubbish it still leaves us with the question about the governing processes of whether the traditional mechanisms have been good enough in testing what is taught. Wherever teachers have been able to establish adequate mechanisms for student criticism - and may I refer here to our own attempts at Brunel to receive annual critiques by our postgraduate students - we get valuable feedback which is, however, only valuable as long as teachers have the moral courage to swing with the criticisms and yet to expose nonsense when it is being put out in the name of criticism.

And this brings me to questions about the role of university teachers within the decision making process about objectives in higher education. We respond to social demand. We respond to economic and manpower demands. We also respond to academic norms, to educational objectives. This is at the heart of the discretion which we call academic freedom. And the 'pure' educational objectives tie up with individual and institutional self-regard or even narcissism. Learning for its own sake means learning for self-gratification. And why the hell not? The establishment of good research standards, effective teaching, elegant and clear writing ought not to require defence. Are not the authors of the White Paper proud of their own prose and logic? Moreover it has a functional usefulness. Crudely put, no teacher is going to be prepared to meet social demands if we are not going to have the time, energy and resources - mainly of time - to be critical, creative and productive. And it is here that we badly need in the whole process an overt recognition of free time and free monies. It is a concept already built into US research and development contracts with universities and one which, I am glad to say, is beginning to insinuate itself into British government funding of research.

In saying this, I do not dismiss the whole problem of teacher accountability. The freedom to be creative is also the freedom which causes universities and polytechnics to put up with a great deal of bad teaching and teachers who neither teach well nor do any research. There are problems here of teacher accountability that one can hardly state without being labelled as anti-democratic.

Finally, I come back to the students. So far I have done no more than posit the assumption that interplay with student criticisms can enhance educational process. It can also, obviously, cause educational objectives to be sharpened up and made more contemporary. None of us fails to meet students who are cleverer, better informed and more far sighted than we are. And the aggregate of student opinion must, inevitably, be setting some of the concerns with which the teaching and research systems ought to become involved.

It is less that general supposition that needs arguing than the more

difficult issue of student status. I should like to attack the simple notion that students are members of the universities or polys which they attend. If they are, they are not full members as is clear from the minority representation which they have on the governing institutions. If we grant that there is a difference between teacher and student in that teachers have skills and concepts which students need to work at before they are mastered we are asuming a difference in role. And it seems far better to openly declare that the institution is providing a service, and a fairly specialised one at that, of which the students are consumers.

From there we go on to get a far clearer idea of how student opinion can enter the decision making system. All welfare state institutions need consumer council mechanisms. A start has been made in the health service with the community health councils. It seems to me to be quite wrong to confuse consumer councils with the governing mechanisms. Consumers cannot easily form part of the go erning system without becoming socialised by it. Their ability to review and to criticise is blunted and not sharpened by membership of, say, University Council or Senate. In all of our welfare state institutions we need what I have called elsewhere a second circuit of democracy or what Rudolph Klein has recently called a counter bureaucracy.

So the system of decision making involves the national setters of purpose, the academic community, the consumers of learning and teaching, the students, and all of them working within difficult to identify public political environments. In general, the mix of interests and the mechanisms do not seem all that bad.

It would be easier if we made the relationships plain and stopped enunciating little white lies about them. It would be easier, for example, if the UGC and DES stopped pretending that they are not laying down major prescriptions within which academic freedom is pursued. They might tell us, for example, how recurrent grants are calculated so that institutions need not enter into fratricidal disputes on deciding how to spend their money. It would be easier if we got straighter with students that they are clients and reagents with the rights of clients rather than part of the governing systems. It would be easier if those who feel that higher education is a tool of industry showed us the evidence so that those who believe in the informative and critical role of higher education could take action about those influences. It would be easier if those who evidently dislike and are worried about higher education said openly what worried them. For example, if Mrs. Thatcher really thinks that the universities are irresponsible, unuseful and over-radical bodies, I wish she would tell us how and also how the polytechnics are going to show themselves to be the places where more socially useful, more respectable, and more reliable pursuits are pursued.

Social Purposes in Search of Higher Education, or Higher Education in Search of Social Purposes?

W L Weinstein

It is now a commonplace that our whole society and its formal educational institutions have so changed in recent decades that the social effects of education must be different qualitatively, and not merely quantitatively, from what they had been in the remoter past. Similarly it is widely thought that the social functions, that is, the parts played in the operation of society, by educational institutions, especially the higher ones, have changed radically.

Without troubling to go into detail, I accept these generalities and their relevance to my object. But my object is not to focus directly on effects and functions, but rather on the social purposes of higher education (HE). That is to say, the social ends or interests which HE could conceivably, or more narrowly, justifiably, serve: or one might say, the socially desirable ends which can be assigned deliberately as a responsibility of HE institutions consciously to promote, for instance, by embracing such ends in their policies and decisions voluntarily or under coercion or irresistible temptation. Conceived in such terms, social purposes are also different from mere social demands.

Much contemporary discussion of social purposes is bedevilled by a failure to grasp the innate complexity of the issues. The difficulties of settling on coherent terms of discussion, by contrast with simple exhortations to promote or resist this or that social purpose, explain why I dwell on them at first. However, the terms which I shall choose represent a provisional and contestable resolution of the difficulties; in fact their contestability may well be an inherent feature of this type of discourse.

My own difficulties can be illustrated briefly. For different and not always compatible reasons - springing from my positions as traditionalist and as modernizer, as humanitarian liberal and as social democrat, as political theory teacher and as bureaucrat manque (all held at best in very precarious alliance) - I can start by agreeing that in some senses and to some degree HE properly has social purpose. I say 'social' purposes, and not strictly 'educational' purposes, a tricky distinction on whose trickiness I shall enlarge below. All the same, I start with a general, but it is only general, readiness to assent to such propositions as: a social purpose of HE is vocational training of specialists required by an industrial society; another social purpose is to promote equality of opportunity, and another that of contributing to the rational direction of social affairs; and, HE now has and can properly have in future a greater diversity of social purposes than ever before.

But the meaning of each proposition, notably the last, is very vague and able to bear such diverse interpretations as well as diverse policy implications that it is far from clear what agreement with them really

commits me to. My first task, then, is not to prescribe social purposes for HE, or even to formulate possible purposes with anything like the concreteness required for policy-making. It is only to adumbrate some of the general difficulties in formulating coherent social purposes in the present context. This is only a first step.

DIFFICULTIES IN THE FORMULATION OF SOCIAL PURPOSES

The causes of the difficulties are several. First, generalizations crumble. For there are obvious divergences of view, such as those springing from the sheer diversity of institutions, types of courses, academic interests, and people, each unit or sub-unit of which may have a different capacity for carrying out a social purpose. Where, therefore, there might be telling objections to all of HE or a whole sector having, say, an overwhelming vocational orientation, there might not be to a few institutions or a department within one of them.[1] Furthermore, there are important divergent interpretations of precisely which social purpose HE has fulfilled in the past, does in fact fulfil now, and will or ought to fulfil in the future; and the future itself is differently interpreted depending on which elements are seen as purposively controllable and which as made for us and in spite of our conscious efforts.

Moreover, views on social purposes are imbedded in complex ways within broad political attitudes - 'political' here referring not only to conventional partisanship as understood in Britain, but more widely to any process involving competition between people over scarce goods and over their ideas as to what is good. This implies that common assertions that HE ought to have this or that social purpose usually depend on an illicit assumption of political consensus, and this may turn out to be unwarranted. The question of a 'national purpose' for HE is therefore a major political question. In attempting to answer it or in acting on their answers academics are acting politically and not simply in their roles as academics conceived in normal professional terms. To state this is to imply neither that such political involvement is necessarily improper nor that it is always proper.

However, the analytical starting point of real interest in this subject is this. If HE, or academic activity under that heading, had only social purposes, then the only types of question before us today would be as follows. First, which social purposes we should have,ie what our society should strive to become in terms of material well-being or other social utilities. Secondly, which social purposes are incompatible with others and therefore what should be their relative priority. And thirdly, technical questions as to the kinds of education, institutional arrangements, and people that would most efficiently promote the most worthy social ends. In short, educational questions would be purely about the instrumental value education has for the achievement of social purposes. Of course on some views of 'education', higher or lower, this would be to understand education not as it should be understood, but only as a species of socially useful 'training' under various headings.

Thus at the heart of many controversies about the social purposes of educatic.. there is not only conflict about the nature and relative value of social purposes: there also lies the assumption that education has its own intrinsic worth.[2] Whatever counts as part of the intrinsic

nature and value of education is distinguishable from the whole range of social utilities that it, justifiably or not, might serve. It is a sphere of human achievement in its own right, and not merely an instrument for achieving human well-being in other respects. The refusal to justify education in extrinsic terms is, of course, nicely caricatured in the report of the ivory tower inhabitant's remark "if it's useful, it must be educationally bad".

It is by virtue of this position, with its initial sharp contrast, that conflicts are conceivable between fulfilling the aims of education per se, including the making of well educated persons, and fulfilling the purposes of society: or I should say, to be more precise, the other purposes of society. For of course education conceived as intrinsically worthwhile, as a separate sphere of human excellences, could be and has been adopted as a purpose of society. It is often remarked, for instance, that the transmission of culture is a social purpose fulfilled by institutions of HE, especially universities, but without distinguishing whether the transmission is an intrinsic value of education or a value extrinsic to it. Our society backs both horses. Such a remark typically hangs on the obvious truth that culture is transmitted by means additional to the formal institutions of HE, but that is another point. Henceforth when I refer to the social purposes of HE, it will be to refer, not to this separate endorsement by society of the intrinsic worth of education, but to aims that are extrinsic to it.

This liberal and humanist view of the immanent value and standards of HE (or its academic activities such as research, scholarship, speculation, conservation and transmission of knowledge)[3] casts some doubt on the rather glib equation of higher education's high ideals with the social fact of minority education: as if elitism in educational values was a necessary, and not an historically contingent, concomitant of social elitism. Of course historically educational ideals have been and are still used to attack, though not always with good reason, expansionism and egalitarianism. But those ideals might well be seen as an indispensable point d'appui in the next rounds of development, when 'the thin stream of intellectual excellence'[4] may need protection against purposes, legitimate themselves, which are extrinsic to education.

However, to assert that a particular extrinsic purpose such as the production of skills useful in the performance of socially approved tasks, has a higher priority than some intrinsic value of education is by no means impermissible. Education per se is not an absolute value. The point is that if higher education is good in principle, then any extrinsic purpose which is not complementary to its aims has to justify its imposition. That such justifications are available I have no doubt (but showing this properly would require detailed argument on particular cases).

It would be obvious from this account of education that claims will also be made, especially on behalf of higher education in its exalted forms, for the essentially non-political character of its activities, and therefore for the independence of higher academic institutions whose freedom is held to be necessary to their activities. At bottom this is a political view: it is as political as its utilitarian contrary: for out of it can easily be extracted the conception of a liberal society, in which a variety of human involvements may plead for exemption from social control and the imposition of purposes that are, by definition, extrinsic to their respective purposes.[5] Thus for, say, art, religion, or higher education

to serve purposes outside their respective rationale and at odds with it is to corrupt them. The role of politics is simply to provide the framework for a range of separate pursuits. The plurality of human goods may co-exist in harmony if we refrain from loading each activity with purposes extrinsic to it. The social responsibility of higher education is therefore negative; it is not to harm or get in the way of other people or society, which is a view we may well regard as lop-sided.

Now although I have said that once the point about the intrinsic value of education is grasped, we can see how substantial it can be in rebutting aspersions cast recently on the conservatism of British academics,[6] I now have to turn the point round and say that it is also a very slippery one. And once it is seen as slippery, we might after all retain much justified suspicion of that conservatism.

For precisely which elements in higher educational processes, practices, and beliefs are in fact covered by this idea of intrinsic worth, of an inner citadel to be protected against the imposition of social purposes? Can one draw a clear line between extrinsic social purposes and intrinsic educational purposes in HE?

It would surely be too simple to equate with this citadel everything that happens to be done by people in HE, out of profound conviction of its intrinsic worth. In reality the identity of an educational system, its institutions and actors, is understood by extension from some pure, abstract characterization of academic activities to more or less formal organizations.[7] We know that education is not confined to formal organizations or learning situations; we know also that institutions have an external identity, obviously existing in real social contexts with characteristics and interests such as size, personnel, procedures, and finance. Agents in academic life have both professional amour propre and personal interests filtered in from their other social roles. The danger lies therefore in idealized description or official portraiture all the more misleading when its use is unconscious.

What, then, in any actual on-going education is valuable for its own sake is elusive and could well be controversial. Is it a certain kind of mastery of a subject, or is it the integrated understanding at a not very specialist level of a cluster of subjects? If education is intrinsically valuable, this will not suffice to defend this or that curriculum, syllabus, teaching technique, length of course, residential policy, age of entry, or even many enshrined views of what qualifies as higher education for policy-making purposes. The move from the ideal, the general, to the actual, the particular, is what is so difficult.

Furthermore any clear line thought to exist between intrinsic educational purposes and extrinsic social purposes may become blurred as soon as education is conceived as a means to personal development, eg the enrichment of personality, or the enlargement of imaginative, communicative, and critical capacities. Even if ideals of personal development are postulated in contrast or opposition to some putative social purposes of education, the ideals will still carry implications as to the type of society that is favourable for their realization - and therefore for the educational processes and institutions thought necessary for such realization. To this extent it becomes, if not absurd, very difficult to sustain a sharp divorce between the social purposes of higher education

(as if they were all extrinsic to it) and educational ideals per se.

It follows from this that the boundaries between the social purposes of HE and its intrinsic ingredients raise a set of interrelated conceptual and practical issues of some complexity. One's view as to how to contend with them will not be uninfluenced by general political and moral considerations.[8]

This preliminary context for discussion, which I have now sketched, is both less and more than a simple shopping list of possible social purposes for HE. I wanted to approach the subject so as to generate a sense of tension and complex interplay between social purposes and HE's intrinsic values; but without assuming the unquestioned priority of one over the other or that there need always be a conflict between them, and with an eye on the problematic nature of any boundary drawn between the inner citadel and the wider community's purposes. Not everyone will find this framework helpful, but there is a need for a coherent starting point to account for resistance to the imposition of social purposes by invoking intrinsic value, and to include the possibility that HE can take on board social purposes either to promote its own educational purposes in a social bargain, or to promote social purposes independently or in spite of their educational implications.

THE INNER CITADEL: AN HISTORICAL SKETCH

The idea of the inner citadel was powerfully reinforced in our history of HE, dominated hitherto by universities and by Oxbridge. Out of our Victorian past we have in Britain inherited the most currently prestigious ideas of educational purpose for HE. Certainly the persistence to this day of a relatively unified outlook in the universities is in large measure due to the hold that Oxbridge has over the academic imagination; and this helps to explain the continuing capacity of British universities to withstand certain social and governmental demands. It is therefore worth mentioning some historically entrenched beliefs and practices which now are and will continue to be under pressure in the course of our further movement from an elite to a mass system of HE.

A primary social function, with some conscious social purpose behind it, had been to educate a minority. The elite's preference for boarding schools reinforced the English, but probably not the Scottish, universities, association with the educational and social benefits of being detached from home and in residence with one's contemporaries under the formative influence of dons. The natural preoccupation was with school leavers, confined to a particular age group, and with moulding them before they were sullied by the practical world.[9] Furthermore, higher education in some remote fastness helped to create a sense of values detached from and possibly hostile to the philistine and utilitarian world of market, industry, and labour. The ideal of the gentleman-scholar,[10] a man of all-round accomplishment rather than of specialized research competence, survives today perhaps more in theory than in practice.

All this was seen, rightly or wrongly, as compatible with the servicing of a limited range of vocations, as universities had done from their early days.[11] But over time, especially after the nineteenth century boom in science, more prestige was accorded to pure research, to knowledge for its own sake, and to theoretical and abstract disciplines. A

pecking order was established among institutions and subjects; and although the universities eventually let in technology, they still adhered to an elevated conception of educational standards. For these and other hard causes, such as money, a vacuum for other institutions, like polytechnics and their predecessors, including the ancestors of the civic universities, existed to be filled, especially as in each generation and with improved primary and secondary provision groups rose demanding an improved life through educational qualifications. Both within and at the historic fringes of what is now HE developed education and training more closely related to economic and professional functions, to the part-time student, and typically this occurred in cities and towns. Craft, technical, administrative, and other applied skills tended to be segregated, and only by virtue of the lack of overall control over institutional development in all sectors of HE has total apartheid been avoided.

SOCIAL PURPOSES AND THE TRANSITION TO MASS HIGHER EDUCATION

Against this crudely sketched historical background, I shall now consider some of the social purposes that have come to the fore in the transition from elite to mass education.

Equality and Expansion

Many people have explained how social demand pressure for HE goes hand in hand with development of an industrial society and its peoples aspirations. But deciding which social purposes HE ought to have involves a large range of questions, not to be examined here, about the kinds of equality to be sought and their justifications, and how much other institutions should share the same purpose.

It is sometimes said that equality of access to HE is, after the manner of primary and secondary education, becoming a citizenship-right, or even a socially compulsory stage in life.[12] But this needs unpacking into at least two social purposes; in practice they are not easy to separate, though their moral and policy significance could well be different.

The first is expressed in the conviction that, as what HE offers is an intrinsic good and good for the person, it should be equally available to all, or to all who can qualify for it. The second is expressed by the conviction that, as access to HE has a differential effect on the social chances of individuals, equality of educational opportunity must exist as an instrument for a just distribution of what HE leads to, that is social goods for individuals in terms of jobs, standard of living, security, and leisure.

As for the first, it is hard to see how academics can oppose it on principle. Such a purpose hardly strikes at the humanist belief that education is intrinsically good and should therefore be spread as widely as possible. Furthermore, without modifying the principle of admission on academic merit, academics are committed to the cultivation of abilities and to catering for them impartially. More should be admitted and taught if more become qualified. Of course the pedagogical and institutional consequences of expansion place brakes on expansion for good educational reasons; what is good should be spread, but not too thinly. However, from this first perspective it can be seen that academics could reasonably feel more strongly committed to using their energies to meet increased demand from

the qualified, than to promoting some greater social equality to which HE may only be instrumental.

This, however, is far from the whole story. Even if we agreed that equality should be promoted without sacrificing academic standards, in just what way are present standards and the disciplines to which they relate necessarily or uniquely expressive of the intrinsic value of higher education? Such value does imply standards, and their formulation is not arbitrary; but, as noted earlier, one must still justify specific standards for particular types of student and courses. Surely educational values are not a homogeneous and internally consistent body of principles and objectives; to invoke 'educational values' simpliciter can be very misleading. How much less true to educational ideals is it to consider the candidate's capacity to benefit from HE in terms of personal development than to consider his capacity to cope with a course up to a given specialized standard?

Educational questions as to which qualifying characteristics and which educational aims are germane to access to HE can become more open. For example, if to accommodate increased demand (as well as for other, educational purposes) there was instituted a universal two-year first degree course, as in Professor Pippard's scheme or an expanded version of the new DipHE scheme, the final level of specialist achievement would be lower than is at present the case with first degrees. But it is difficult to see how the Pippard scheme (to isolate it for the moment) could be attacked as a corruption of HE's intrinsic worth. It would mean modifying conventional ideas about degrees and what they represent.[13] What critics little notice, however, is that such a scheme preserves the pyramid of academic excellence, which is vital to higher education; the pyramid's base is widened with a new kind of basic layer, and the distance from top to bottom layers in the degree hierarchy is preserved. The overall structure of standards is arguably more important than a particular standard. Some such scheme could provide a way of meeting a social purpose which is congruent with academic values, construed as a concern with impartiality and with the cultivation of intellectual abilities. There may be a trade-off: the greater equality of access achieved may be to something that is 'inferior' to what existed before, though only so long as generalist education is regarded as inferior to specialist.

Radically widening the intake to HE brings in a more diverse type of clientele in terms of abilities, expectations, motives, and background cultures.[14] For some this will conjure up an image of barbarian hordes smashing through the temple gates. There could be real problems about students' receptivity to academic communication, about the basis of common values between student and teacher needed for effective teaching. Some educational futurologists come perilously close to wishful thinking about the chances of preserving the ethos of individuated teaching and close tutor-student relations in mass education, though they are right to insist on the need for it.[15] But if the pressures to meet these and other problems squeeze first degrees into the generalist mould, it might still be remembered that there is much lack of clarity as well as diversity of belief about the special character of HE's educational aims, about which skills and attitudes it is meant to cultivate.[16] Mass education may therefore create opportunities for the reconsideration of general educational values.

Reference to the maintenance of the existing hierarchy of degrees and

standards above the new 'mass' level, will hardly assuage the feeling of those who seek to use HE as a more positive instrument for promoting social equality in non-educational respects. Their views, frustrated by the shortage of resources and under attack on both moral and practical grounds, are not to be dismissed (if I may put it in this fence-sitting way). It may not be a bogus issue how far HE, or sectors in it, is causally and morally responsible for the perpetuation of inequalities in the wider community, if only as the transmitter of inequalities established at an earlier stage. Views can reasonably differ on this as on the issue of how far manipulation of access to educational institutions can effectively remedy inequalities.

However, HE institutions, some of which are predominantly concerned with 'doing their own thing' rather than with serving society, must out of prudential self-regard alone react to social conditions round them. Certainly when social inequality is deeply contested, as we have seen in the USA, educational institutions may not be able to achieve the academic objectives of political neutrality and non-involvement. When the conflict reaches a certain pitch, not to intervene may be a kind of non-neutrality. In such circumstances HE may have to accept a special responsibility, even at the expense of its educational standards. This could be justified even in terms of self-interest, for if in the longer run an egalitarian strategy were successful, there would be restored the less turbulent and more tolerant social conditions which are favourable to politically neutral and detached academic activities. Whether such an extreme case can become relevant to conditions in this country, and whether there are other grounds for considering HE as an instrument for social equality, are questions which cannot be pursued at this point.

However in an extreme form this second perspective on the social function of HE presents a fundamental challenge. It seems impossible not to conceive of HE as an essentially political phenomenon, carrying out the authoritative allocation of scarce resources, including social chances. The critical question, which I can only raise here, is how far such a view undermines the traditional liberal view of HE as some sort of inner citadel concerned with values intrinsic, not extrinsic, to the process of education.

'Hard' Vocationalism

Hard vocationalism (as distinct from 'soft') I define as the deliberate attempt to match the content of education or training to the skills, typically rather narrow and technical, needed for effective job performance. The conjunction of individual aspirations to improved social positions and the expansion of the demand for technically trained personnel has created a general sense that a main social purpose of HE, or parts of it, is to provide for the improvement and transmission of skills required in the general division of labour.[17] This is a utilitarianism which sees HE serving not only the needs of individual aspirants but of an economic system. It is one basis for contemporary manpower planning ideas about HE. When politicians talk of getting value for money, this is one approach they have in mind.[18]

There are technical weaknesses in manpower planning for HE, especially when long-run forecasts for a wide field of skills and jobs are involved. All

sorts of assumptions about future social and technological changes have to be made and may not turn out to hold, and the margins of error widen as the mix of variables increases in number and complexity. For the time being large-scale enterprises along such lines remain utopian.

But there are real, if less sweeping, misgivings about short-term, narrow-gauged forms of manpower planning imposed on HE. The attempt to match course content and any vocational need may be highly imperfect. Furthermore, as the rate of social change accelerates, a premium may be placed on broader skills, the skill of picking up new skills, and of course periodic retraining. For Honours graduates but also for others, there may be fewer reasonable expectations in future that subject knowledge or technical know-how will be directly relevant to a particular range of jobs - immediately after taking a qualification and still less later on.

In any case we must ask what is so wrong if jobs do not make use of education or specific knowledge. And how could they? Even when a course has an initial vocational impetus, there is often a natural tendency in educational institutions to define their own academic content and aims; intellectual, not practical, criteria get the upper hand in course development.[19]

It is commonly suggested that 'hard'vocationalism as a social purpose of HE is not all that unsuccessful in vocational terms, but even so it is quite inimical to some supposed proper, ie intellectually determined, course development. Probably for some forms of training such independent development would be difficult to envisage in any case. These points do, however, raise the question of how to define the boundaries of 'higher' education and of 'education'.[20]

In some form or another these issues may face the new polytechnics and perhaps colleges of education more urgently than they will the universities. Industry and government may be expecting more 'hard' vocationalist goods from polytechnics than it is reasonable to expect. The polytechnics show signs of seeking purer academic interests and higher criteria of achievement. If, for instance, they reduce their part-time courses that will raise social opportunity, and not merely vocationalist, questions about their social purposes: though other institutions may well provide the answers. Of course polytechnics and their antecedents, and other institutions, did in a sense save the universities from stronger pressures for 'hard' vocationalism; and the expansion of the non-university sector which is now planned is probably quietly welcomed in universities as a buffer against both 'hard' vocationalism and egalitarianism.

A Digression: 'Continuing Education'

Having briefly mentioned retraining it would be remiss to pass on without mentioning some important questions surrounding the future of 'continuing' or 'intermittent' education. There are at least two purposes of society at large which such education may serve on an increasing scale in future: 'hard' vocationalism (and perhaps 'soft') and equality of opportunity. It may also be conceived as a valuable way of revitalizing and extending personal development over what will be an ever longer span of life. Obviously there are now large obstacles from inside and outside HE institutions to an extensive system in which stretches of study will alternate with stretches of employment. If applied to universities it would shake the historically entrenched concentration on one age group; it could

eventually relieve demand pressure from that group by spreading it; and it may raise the overall level of strongly motivated students in an age of mass HE.

However conversion on a big scale to this idea would involve a very high mobility of students, conjured up by Ashby's advice that 'universities should be entered through a revolving door.'[21] I am not clear what this would eventually mean for any sense of homogeneous community within universities or indeed other institutions, or for their sense of identity and the subjective satisfaction of people attached to them. It may tend towards greater depersonalization and looser institutional loyalties, but perhaps in a very mobile society we are already on the way to that. If teachers' commitment to teaching were affected adversely by a floating student population, the educational advantages could well be diminished. One conjectures whether such problems would arise if the whole profession were itself to become so flexible as to teach to all levels, types and ages of student. Conjectures apart, this structural change in HE seems a natural extension, with marginal doubts about refresher courses with a 'hard' vocational emphasis, of the ideal of a well educated society, which is not to be equated with an efficiently run society. It is, however, likely to bring with it a host of unprecedented problems, as most structural changes do.

'Soft' Vocationalism

By 'soft' vocationalism I mean assessing education's contribution to individual job performances, or performances of institutions, in ways that place a high premium on characteristics that are also highly valued in the well educated person; for instance, where practical skills are allied with widely applicable qualities of mind and sensibility. The point of regarding this evaluation as vocational is that it stresses the utilitarian consequences of having, or failing to have, these qualities. It may, for instance, be crucial to the making of effective practical judgements and taking decisions under stress that one should have the ability to absorb new facts and hypotheses, to analyze problems critically and objectively, to identify or interpret the principles behind a line of reasoning, and to communicate with others.[22] Obviously an employer can value the qualities of the well educated person, not excluding his moral awareness, for his own purposes, not for the sake of the ideal itself or the person who possesses the qualities. The qualities of the good functionary and of the well educated man may considerably overlap; but that would be contingent, among other things, on the nature of the people and organization for whom he worked. There are also real possibilities that, with the spread of educational ideals, the criteria of 'soft' vocationalism have recently undergone some change and will continue to change. In these respects, 'soft' vocationalism is not necessarily inimical to a wide range of ideas about the intrinsic worth of education and educational content based on inner ideals.

This may be putting it too low. 'Soft' vocationalism could be constricting, but it can also stimulate us to question whether, on non-vocational criteria, we are really producing well-rounded people with a wide range of intellectual and other general abilities. Given the kind of complex and rapidly changing society we expect in future, more people and more institutions will need flexibility, open-mindedness, and capacities to live with uncertainty and flux and to integrate diverse strands of knowledge with social sensitivity over a broad range of issues. 'Soft' vocationalism - a kind of lifemanship -

so conceived might well work in harmony with attempts to alter curricula to compensate for over-specialization.

However, optimistic speculation must be held in check. It is not easy to see how HE can somehow teach practical judgement.[23] Academics are rarely suited for that role. Until we can have a well-founded confidence in what education can do to engender 'decision-making' qualities, it would be misleading to suggest that in some concerted way a social purpose of universities or HE generally can be 'to improve the running of our affairs'.[24]

It may not be sufficient to conclude that 'soft' vocationalism could be compatible with or an heuristic aid to our ideas of education for its own sake. For it may become politically important, even if not vital, to the general credit of HE in the wider community, with its utilitarian scale of values, to realise in practical ways some of the spin-off from the powers of the well educated person. It may be worth reflecting on why so many people in positions of social responsibility now believe that universities prejudice their students against becoming involved in the management of society's practical affairs. Some of this may be inherent in the educational process, eg to value solo performance over team-work. Furthermore, a radical divorce between universities and the rest of society's practical concerns, were it even possible, would not be in the interests of universities. Enmeshed as they are in society, they have some interest in guiding people of ability towards responsible roles in the practical work of society.

This, it should be clear, is not to advocate a mutual alliance or embrace between, say, universities or other HE institutions on the one hand, and the powers of government, industry and commerce on the other. In fact I shall conclude with some arguments for at least a partial separation within the bounds of realism.

Nevertheless those who teach and administer in HE bear some responsibility for the development of the people who pass through their hands. We cannot be indifferent to questions about the social roles subsequently to be filled by students and how the development of personal capacities and attitudes is related to the roles. The question of what kind of people we are cultivating cannot, except in the abstract, be readily separated from the question of what kind of help we are giving them as members of society and from judgements about the kind of society that does or ought to exist. Just as much as it may be an illusion to think that no academic ideals need be endangered by adopting this or that social purpose, so it may be an illusion to think that what we do in the academic world is neutral among all prevailing conceptions of society and has to do only with academic ideals.

Moral Development

One complaint made nowadays is that HE does too little to promote the well rounded ideal of educated persons; too little is made of forms of self-awareness, an awareness of impulse and other aspects of our affective nature, an imaginative understanding of the variety and intensity of human emotion. The cult of technical objectivity is the obvious target of such a complaint. But a vital distinction is needed between

educational and social purpose, though how to draw the distinction is disputable.

Some complaints are based on the idea of many-sided awareness, and as such they come within the bounds of argument about the nature of education itself.[25] The complainants seek to break the grip of the objectively examinable 'subject' on prevailing notions of education.

But such arguments for personal development in education may be conflated with the view that by developing a 'moral concern' HE can contribute to society's health or stability. Thus phrases crop up like 'to counter the drift and the tendency to dissolution of our time',[26] or universities are 'afraid of judgement involving values or morals'.[27] The plea for developing moral awareness as an educational ideal shades into a plea for a revival of society's moral health, with the content of that morality unspecified, as if we would all agree on what it should be. As intellectuals, many of them in universities, have taken an active part in the critical demolition of Christian morality as well as other moralities, it is no doubt understandable if they are asked, in effect, to pick up the pieces. This view may exaggerate their actual influence. All the same, one may wonder whether the kind of 'moral awareness' likely to be cultivated in the free and critical context of HE would reflect back on society a moral content which would please it. Here is a source for an inexhaustible tension.

It is all too easy to call for an 'ethic of responsibility', or to suggest that education includes the transmission of common standards of citizenship (Robbins Report 1963). Nor might it be wise to suggest that the standards of social morality would be improved as a result of the community's dissatisfaction with an education that underplayed moral awareness. External pressure could inhibit the critical spirit and create difficulties for any deliberate educational effort to develop moral awareness and its cognate capacities.

There are here two points of cardinal importance. On the one hand there is the danger of society trying to cash an authentic educational concern with the development of moral, personal, and social awareness into the currency of a specific social purpose, which is to improve social morality as conceived in a particular way. On the other hand, HE itself consists of institutions and purposes that need a certain climate of moral opinion in which to flourish; they cannot survive on total scepticism or agnosticism about morality. It is a peculiarly complex question as to the ways in which the morality necessary to a healthy, functioning academic community is congruent with the morality which prevails in other parts of society. To the extent that there is congruence or mutual dependence there may well be scope for HE to promote or defend some elements of general social morality. How this might be done, and in what circumstances, are questions which cannot be taken up here. The most obvious starting point is to examine the relations between the values of academic activity and those of a liberal democratic society.

There seems to be an increasing tendency to look to HE as an agent for the cure of social malaise, or for solving social problems which tax all our intellectual and moral resources. This tendency is likely to become stronger in Britain; it has emerged prominently in the USA in recent decades, and there raised questions of the first magnitude about relations between HE and society. It is probably too simple to speak of a single

tendency, and I am not sure what short-hand description it should bear; but as the last heading I have chosen:

Higher Education as Society's Powerhouse

It is possible quickly to focus on a cluster of recently fashionable ideas about the social purposes of HE by bringing together three ideas: that knowledge has become a kind of social power in a technically sophisticated and planning-minded society; that the application of man's power rationally to order his social affairs is a practical extension of educational ideals; and that HE has become deeply implicated in the productive and administrative processes of society.

Clark Kerr states: 'Knowledge has certainly never in history been so central to the conduct of an entire society... the knowledge industry... (can) serve as the focal point for national growth. And the university is at the centre of the knowledge process.'[28] George Brosan (1971) reports the demand that our collective knowledge should be applied to urgent political and moral problems, and himself develops the idea that universities can perform 'monitoring' functions for the whole society.[29] But I have reservations about universities or any extensive parts of HE acting as the intellectual powerhouse of social control and change, as problem-spotter and solution-seeker at all social levels, from the most sophisticated planning bureaux to the most mundane grassroots.

In the first place, this self-aggrandizing role is founded on optimism about the new policy sciences, decision-making theory, and generally the applied social sciences, a view which may harbour illusions about their capabilities. One need not be an obscurantist about the real technical advances made in these fields to express doubts about some of their empirical assumptions and, especially, many of their moral assumptions. To encourage society to look to HE for salvation through knowledge, though a good rationalist's recipe, may raise hopes that cannot be fulfilled, with perhaps unfavourable consequences for higher education or the wider society.

Secondly, even if such an expansive role can be filled competently, should it be filled, and if so, how far? Here details of the bargaining terms and power relationships between academics and outside bodies, such as government and industry, could be very important. Broadly, one would be concerned that academic people and their institutions should not have their independence and political neutrality impaired because of their external involvements. External involvements per se do not pose a threat; but if academics or their institutions become very extensively involved, and as more than detached advisors, with practical applications of knowledge to industrial, social, and political processes, how convincingly could they then argue the case for knowledge for its own sake and education's intrinsic value? A paradoxical point arises from this: It is arguable that the effectiveness of higher education's position as active intellectual director, critic, and monitor for society may partly depend on its being uninvolved with social purposes. For it gains authority in such roles, not merely because of the technical expertise it can offer, but because it is known to have other roles in which it is socially detached, and is capable of disinterestedness, open-mindedness, objectivity, and impartiality.

By expressing these reservations I wish to guard against a tendency to

welcome uncritically the expanding role of HE in society. Because of our natural desire to see ourselves as socially important and to persuade others that this is the case, we may overlook the points at which there can be a tension between social purposes, many of them properly adopted by HE, and academic values, and therefore a need at least to strike a balance between them. We are especially susceptible to the illusion that when adopting social purposes academics or their institutions are not implicitly taking sides in political or moral conflicts.

Of course, objectively our world has been changing in the direction indicated by Kerr, and perhaps this is all the more natural in an age when traditional moral and religious authorities no longer carry the weight they once did. The use of knowledge and the power it can confer raises major questions about the social responsibilities of the creators and transmitters of knowledge. Whatever they intend, they cannot abjure consideration of the social consequences of their academic activities, as discussion of science in the post-A bomb years has made plain. Indeed the more academics have to consider the social effects of their activities qua academics, the more they also have to become involved in the active determination of society's purposes. Rather than being the passive servants of society they may be obliged to become more openly politicized, focussing their attention on the question of the kind of society it would be proper for them to serve.

It is equally important to notice that it cannot be safely assumed that by virtue of any intention to be deliberately detached from social purposes, we thereby achieve impartiality, disinterestedness, political neutrality, and so forth. Thus to speak, as I have done, of academic values in contrast with social purposes, is to run the risk of harbouring illusions about the extent to which these values are achieved in present conditions.

Nevertheless I should like in concluding to expand on the paradoxical point made earlier, and this will bring me back to the analytical starting point concerning the contrast between the citadel of academic activities and its social purposes. Ultimately however much HE is implicated in society, properly or improperly, as beneficiary or benefactor of economic, social, and political conditions, it may have to continue to exist in active tension with society if academic ideals are to be self-perpetuating. There is good sense, educationally and socially, in the criticism that universities have a concern for their students only as potential academics.[30] But it is also a vital concern. For academic activity in HE to be self-perpetuating it has to some extent to be unworldly. In each generation HE has to provide exemplars, for the next generation, of socially uncommitted and irrelevant scholarship, teaching, and research. For only by preserving this element - which does not mean in practice preserving it in every single corner of HE but generously spreading it throughout - can it begin to maintain capacities for neutrality and independence, for objectivity and disinterestedness, which may make what it has to offer at the same time socially useful. Too close a social involvement can make HE socially useless.

It is this thought which leads me to believe that it is a matter of major concern to academics how to adjust their conserving instincts to the demands of a changing world. In that process they may have to become not timidly withdrawn but at times actively, indeed politically, involved in shaping all our institutions even when our purpose may be the limited one of creating spaces for continuing academic detachment from social or political purposes. And that, too, is a paradoxical thought worth further reflection.

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1) On diversity see contributions by Peter Venables in G. Brosan, C. Carter, R. Layard, P. Venables & G. Williams - Patterns and Policies in Higher Education, Penguin Books, 1971, pp. 47-55, 91-96.

2) A view most closely associated in Britain with the writings of R.S. Peters; for example, his essay in R.S. Peters, ed., The Concept of Education, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1967. Although many points in my paper depend on this view, my doubts about the ultimate validity of Peters' distinction between the intrinsic worth and extrinsic purposes of education go beyond the marginal doubts I express below. To go beyond them here would create a diversion into conceptual analysis. It must suffice here to say that my deeper doubts, suppressed in the main text of this paper, arise from the possibility of seeing all education as in reality deeply imbedded in the social interests of the particular cultures in which it occurs.

3) This is part of a longer list compiled by C. Carter in Brosan, et al, op. cit., pp. 77-78.

4) Eric Ashby, in W.R. Niblett & R.P. Butts, eds., Universities Facing the Future, World Year Book of Education 1972-73, Evans Brothers, p.32.

5) See W.L. Weinstein, "The Private and the Free: A Conceptual Inquiry" in J.R. Pennock & J.W. Chapman, etds., Privacy, Atherton Press, N.Y., 1971 pp. 27-55.

6) A.H. Halsey and M. Trow, The British Academics, Faber, 1970 cited by Venables in Brosan, et al, op. cit., p. 16.

7) Argued in W.L. Weinstein, "The Academic and the Political" in forthcoming book, as yet untitled, edited by Alan Montefiore, with articles on the conceptual and practical problems involved in academic neutrality, impartiality, detachment, and objectivity, by Montefiore, Charles Taylor, Leszek Kolakowski, Andrew Graham, Louis Marin, et al.

8) It is worth adding to this point that the wider community has a legitimate concern with and authority over the settlement of educational issues for at least the following reasons: society has a proper interest in answers to the question of what is a good education; educational ideals have logical implications for and practical influence upon conceptions of ther social goals; an academic 'clerisy' is not solely qualified to judge on such matters; educational institutions draw their wealth and manpower from the general stock of resources; as a quid pro quo for the freedom and resources for promoting intrinsically worthwhile educational purposes, extrinsic social purposes may properly be imposed on educational institutions.

9) Eric Robinson, The New Polytechnics, Penguin Books, 1968, p. 47; "A Comprehensive Reform of Higher Education" in Higher Education Review, vol. 3, No. 3, Summer 1971, at pp. 3-8.

10) Erik Ashby, Technology and the Academics, Macmillan, 1958, p.49

11) Marjorie Reeves,ed., Eighteen Plus, Faber, 1965, p.17.

12) Ashby, in Niblett & Butts, eds., loc. cit.

13) On the need to modify the meaning of a degree, see L. Cerych & D.E. Furth, "On the Threshold of Mass Higher Education" in Niblett & Butts, eds., op. cit., p. 19, and Ashby, loc. cit. For hostility to modification and Pippard, see Charles Carter, in Brosan et al, op. cit., p. 82n.

14) Cerych & Furth, op. cit., p.19.

15) Cerych & Furth, op. cit., p. 22; Ashby, op. cit., p. 35.

16) F.R. Jevons, "New University Courses: Breadth and Balance" in F.R. Jevons & H.D. Turner, eds., What Kinds of Graduates do we Need?, Oxford U.P., 1972, p. 101.

17) Brosan, in Brosan et al, op. cit., p. 102.

18) Partially reflected in the proposal for a Manpower Council. See Report from the Expenditure Committee, Session 1972-73, Further and Higher Education, Vol. I, para 32 (HMSO).

19) For points in this and the preceding paragraph I am indebted to Jevons, op. cit., p. 97, as I do not write from first hand experience.

20) Nothing in principle precludes 'hard' vocationalism being placed alongside general studies or other attempts to widen educational horizons. It is very difficult in any case to say a priori precisely at what point in the balance of time and money expended, in the balance of a syllabus, or in the balances between subjects, 'hard' vocationalism distorts or unjustifiably diminishes the truly educational element - for a given student, department, institution or sector of higher education.

21) Ashby, op. cit., p. 33.

22) A.L. Buley, "Defining the Parameters" in Jevons & Turner, eds., op. cit., p.57.

23) Advocated by Jo Grimond, "What's the Use of Universities?" in The Times Higher Education Supplement, 16 June 1972, p.13.

24) Grimond, "Expensive Failure of Britain's Elite", The Times, 19 July 1971.

25) Peters, op. cit., p. 7; W.R. Niblett, "The Survival of Higher Education" in Change, May 1972, p.45.

26) Niblett, "Higher Education: One System or Two?" In New Society, 25 Jan. 1973, p. 180.

27) Grimond, in THES.

28) Quoted in Cerych & Furth, op. cit., pp. 23-4.

29) Brosan, in Brosan et al, op. cit., pp. 107, 69

30) Ibid, p. 106.

Comment
Professor Sir Brian Pippard

It is in the minds of many of us here that drift in the universities has reached the state of being a menace to education and that some sort of planning is needed to counteract this tendency. Mr Weinstein's paper has analysed a number of the problems in some detail, sufficient at all events to demonstrate that the purpose of education is not well enough defined to justify an attempt at establishing a new pattern to which somehow we should compel everyone to conform. This would be to adopt in a different context the attitude of the conservative academic who asks no more than that the young men should subscribe to an ethos that was rather daring when he was a boy; or the attitude of some leaders of industry whose analysis of the problem appears to boil down to the proposition 'because universities could not survive without the wealth provided by industry, therefore the universities must ensure that industry is supplied with the graduates it needs'. Now these are defensible points of view which are held by intelligent folk, and certainly not to be dismissed out of hand by progressive thinkers who sometimes prove to be no less bigoted than many reactionaries. Mr Weinstein is no bigot - he errs, if anything, in the opposite direction of being too sensitive to difficulties of decision - and we must be grateful that he has presented us with so clear a statement of the dilemmas.

I shall not comment on his argument in detail - everyone will have an opportunity for that during the discussion - but shall seek rather to look at the same problems from the point of view of a manipulator rather than an analyst. My inclination is not to construct by rational thought the idea of a university, but to ask rather what action we might take that would produce any significant change, and only afterwards enquire whether anything good might emerge or be pulled out of the action. In other words, I am against drift not simply because it often leads in the wrong direction, but temperamentally, as one who prefers to believe in retaining some slight control over his destiny and would rather, at a pinch, be discredited for taking a wrong decision than credited when inertia accidentally allows the right to triumph. But the cloister is no place for heroics, and one must ask whether vigorous action is ever justified or whether drift may not be the essential mechanism with which the academic community works out its destiny . The scientist will recognise some sort of analogy in diffusion, that

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Note: I shall use the word 'universities' to mean the whole higher education sector; the alternative forms are too clumsy and in any case I think what I have to say applies to all institutions of higher education. I may see everything too exclusively from the Oxbridge point of view but you will, I hope, be charitable and attribute any naiveties to natural simplicity reinforced by a sheltered life. Above all, in using a single word to denote higher education in general, I wish to imply that we are all in this together, whatever government may do to sunder us.

process which causes clusters of particles to drift apart slowly as if there were some centrifugal tendency pushing them away from their neighbours, when in fact it is only the random motion of each particle independent of the others which is responsible for the effect. So too when we look at social chance we may infer from the fact that change has taken place that some force has been operative, and we may delude ourselves that the force is to some degree under our control, when the truth may be only that progress is to be equated with change and not with pre-determined change.

There are exceptions. The last war not only exposed very sound reasons for enlarging higher education, but did so at the same time as the institutions were being stripped of a large proportion of their staff. When, therefore, the Barlow Report called for a great expansion in the number of science graduates, the universities were glad to co-operate, and to inaugurate an era of professionalism that served us well for a generation and only now is beginning to be seen as a threat to the intellectual health of the country. But it should be recognised that planned change of this sort is not normally possible. The present time-scale for social change is apparently rather short, though it is hard to achieve historical perspective here, and opinions may differ as to whether it is three years or fifteen that is the typical period. Nevertheless, it is certainly shorter than the average lifetime of a university teacher in a permanent position. Only in an expansive phase can change be effected sufficiently quickly by the introduction of new university staff, and normally it is to be expected that the rate of change will be very slow. Indeed, left to themselves, it is arguable that the universities would never change; the story of university evolution is the story of royal commissions and major wars, and I see this innate conservatism as almost inevitable in an activity that depends for its success on the willing acceptance by all concerned of the philosophical basis of the work. Even when the necessity for change is obvious to many, it will not be fruitful unless there is a consensus favouring change, which is likely to come about only in a time of crisis, and not through the daily intercourse of academics whose basic assumptions are sufficiently well in harmony to allow them the luxury of quarrelling only on academic matters. Conservatism is therefore the norm in university affairs, and if we are to discuss how change may take place we have to discuss the nature of the forces which will be strong enough to create radical alterations in our thinking. As in the affairs of nations, the most potent influences are famine and fear. And, happily for those who believe in change, both of these are with us now, at any rate in embryo.

Famine we may discern, though it might better be called rationing, as following from the policies of the government. It might even intensify to the extent of forcing universities to think in broader terms of their priorities and purposes, but I doubt it. On the other hand , the element of fear introduced by the student population provides an impetus which only grows with resistance. I beg your indulgence if in spelling this out I am tediously reiterating what you all know already.

Looking through the programme for this conference, I thought one might reasonably infer from the titles of the contributions and the choice of contributors that control was still in the hands of the senior members of the universities. Surely this is unrealistic. Without embarking on an analysis of the future progress of student power in higher education, I will be content with the fairly safe prediction that it is going to increase and not disappear. Recent events in Cambridge have shown that a body of conservative dons is about as effective as, though certainly less wise than, King Canute in stemming the flood tide. When Mr Weinstein asks whether social purposes are in search of higher education or higher education in search of social purposes, I have little doubt that it is the former that is nearer the mark. Higher education, as we were brought up to think of it, is on the run with social purpose rampantly in pursuit, and we are now having to face up to the fact that the institutions of higher education are the creation of government in response to the will of the people. Furthermore, the people whose will is most peremptory in its demand is the will of the students undergoing higher education. This body of opinion is liable to be capricious, by which I mean, in the terms of my earlier remarks, that the time scale for its change is very much shorter than the time scale for change in the personnel affected, that is, the university teachers. But, however capricious, and whatever meaning we attach to the word *relevance*, the student demand is for something having moral and social content, and not for the exclusive pursuit of knowledge divorced from action.

I do not believe we can ignore this pressure - I don't believe we ought to. Far better to hear the cry of those who ask for bread, and put the stone back in our pocket, even though it is a very precious stone. There is no need to swing from one extreme to the other, to imagine that our traditions of scholarship must be abandoned in the face of the barbarian hordes just because the paths of learning do not constitute a perfect way of life, except for a few. This is not asked of us. To sacrifice what we believe in is no better than refusing to consider the beliefs of others. The vociferous student demanding relevance or revolution may shout louder than the studious one who looks for certainty, as a starting-point for his own adventures, but our task is to listen to both - and I repeat, to both. We cannot say which in the end will make the greater contribution to the well-being of others, or derive the greater satisfaction from his life, and we cannot fulfil other than an authoritarian social purpose by pretending that we have something to give to one and nothing to the other. For if we really believe in ourselves, we have something we can try to communicate to all, and that is, in brief, a respect for intellectual processes in the discovery, refinement and propagation of truth - and not simply objective or academic truth, but truth also in our relationships with one another and the world around us. This is a matter that Mr Weinstein has discussed at length, and so well, at the end of his paper that I need do no more than commend his words to you, with all the challenge that they imply, and no playing down of the paradoxes. If we are to keep the respect of our students we must ourselves display something of the moral courage that we would have them show in their lives, and that means coming down from our dais into their midst, revealing our weaknesses and uncertainties, claiming perhaps experience but not wisdom. We all prefer to hide behind the shield of our expertise - after all, did not most of us welcome the chance of scholastic life because it gave us protection from reality, with honour and a good living wage thrown in? Now

the real world is clamouring for admission to our cloister, we had better put a brave face on it. Just possibly we may find that in accepting the inevitable we have broken free from the debris of drift, and can begin to plan for a future in which our cherished learning and research may thrive in the company - and very agreeable company at that - of students who will not always aspire to follow our ways, but even so will allow us to do what little we can to help them discover for themselves the purpose of their lives. And then we shall have a university.

Comment D W S Gray

Mr Weinstein has shown us, I think, that it is not possible to go on talking about issues in terms of a contrast between intrinsic and extrinsic purposes in our activities. What I want to say is not meant to represent a disagreement with his points, because if I have understood the essence of his argument it is that we cannot avoid the *political* arena, and in this I want to agree with him. What I am concerned about is *how we should be* political. And I think that this is one of the problems implied in the very title of this conference.

I am not at all convinced that we are clear about the categories we are using in relation to a discussion of purposes. Can we get anywhere by using such concepts as 'national purposes', 'social purposes', 'educational purposes','personal purposes' etc? I hope I am not being too ivory towered in questioning the validity and indeed the usefulness of the terms in which our debate is being set. I think that Mr Weinstein's paper went a very long way towards a full exposition of our dilemma in terms of a dialectic of social versus educational purposes; but it also seemed to demonstrate how stultifying such a contrast is. It seems to me that Professor Pippard was able all too easily to parcel up that argument with the label 'analytical', and put it back on the common room mantelpiece. We are at the mercy of *managerial* motives, and we have got to learn to speak in managerial concepts. This does not mean that we lose the option to teach the managers some of *our* concepts, nor does it mean that we don't have something to say in the form of a critique of management.

The contrast which I find most enlightening is thus not 'social v educational', but 'managerial v cultural'. I think that there is a genuine and manifest tension between these *two frames of reference*. It is perhaps not ultimately possible to reconcile the different languages which are appropriate to these two motivational fields. Listening to Professor Kogan this morning, I was ready to accept all his points, even though some of them made me grind my teeth in frustration, just because he was describing the world from the point of view of the political managers of our economy. Somebody has to do that. Can we, as a profession, undertake that responsibility *and allow it to dictate the terminology in which all our other thinking has to take place*? I must say that I conceive my own major responsibility to be cultural rather than managerial, which is to say that I am concerned about the minds of my students and the ethos of our times. I feel like saying: let the managers manage their numbers and manipulate their extraordinary and sometimes deformed fiscal and administrative categories. Their job is to keep us all moderately happy and to minimise the back-stabbing and throat-cutting tendencies in the micropolitical cosmos of higher education. They do not excel at it. Our job is to learn, to disseminate the methods and the results of learning in ourselves and our disciples. But our contemporary environment has turned us into a sort of communication industry. I am wondering if we shouldn't learn something from the Press, which prides itself on being the Fourth Estate of the Realm. Perhaps we are the Fifth Estate, or better, the *Fifth Column,* condemned to *appear* conservative in order to be allowed the privilege of subversion? Has not First Lord of the Treasury recently remarked on a

contradiction at the heart of education, that conflict of purpose between conservation and innovation? This contradiction is the central issue in any cultural policy of any kind.

I want to qualify these concepts of 'objectivity', 'neutrality', and 'disinterestedness' which Mr Weinstein thinks are the qualities of an appropriately academic attitude. For instance, do we not also have to be subtle, disingenous and clever? If it is not our job directly to change social and political institutions (except perhaps on certain levels our educational institutions), we are committed to a more tricky and sensitive business of criticising and modifying the *mental and emotional institutions* of common conception and usage. We can't pretend to ourselves that we are not transformers. As such, we are all, in Illich's sense, cultural revolutionaries, committed to the tasks of *reformulating* reality, rather than reforming it. That entails upon us a number of censorial functions.

Our difficulty seems to stem from being in the pay of the State. Are we in the hands of party politicians, or of permanent civil servants? Or perhaps we are committed to think of *ourselves* as civil servants. Are we agents of the state? It seems to me that this is only possible as 'double agents'. This is, I believe a morality forced upon us by the necessity for both politicians and civil servants to frame policies in terms which will collect votes. If I understand the motives which have led to the foundation of the Independent University at Buckingham, under the leadership of the 'dcyon of Government Studies', I would have to say that they have only trivially altered this situation. They have just limited the number of voters to those with money. Yet there is one way in which that foundation is instructive: it is based on a view which distinguishes the needs of society from the needs of the state as interpreted by Government. But does it distinguish the needs of society from the needs of industrial managers? None of us, I believe, is unwise enough to deny the economic basis of existence; but which of us will be brave enough to allow the ethics of industrial management to dictate our cultural policy?

I was not happy therefore with the last sections of Mr Weinstein's paper, particularly the part headed 'Higher Education as Society's Powerhouse'. I'm not at all sure that we can be as sceptical as Mr Weinstein is about the moral functions of higher education. We do have an 'interest' in our culture that is more than objective and less than neutral. For a start, I think that the environment of political and economic expression in our culture is permeated by so much obliquity of utterance, if not prevarication and misrepresentation, that academics should perhaps be beginning to discuss the feasibility of a rectification of names. One of these names, in particular, seems to me to be giving us a lot of trouble. I believe that we are obliged to examine together the notion of 'morality'. Here is a 'mental institution' which needs reconceiving.

I don't accept Mr Weinstein's jibe about the 'unspecified content of a morality'. Can we ever actually talk about the content of a morality? Isn't the content of morality individual feelings and wishes? I think morality is a matter of *form*, or integrity of structure in human relations and imagination. Why do we find it difficult to talk about this? Is it because we think it is somehow a problem for the ethicist or the aesthetician? Is it that the professional academic philosophers are thought to be the specialists in this area, so we should leave it to them, following

the principle of the division of labour? Does the structure of academic specialism and careers lead us to believe that the philosopher is something like the physicist with a departmentalised 'subject'? Is this the result of our belief in the virtues of objectivity?

I think that what I want to hear is a little less academically impassioned objectivity, and a bit more dispassionate subjectivity. It may be that we could learn something from the artists, in emulating their insistence on the integrity of the imagination.

What Shall We Teach?

Marjorie Reeves

It is a striking fact that when the young nations of Western Europe were emerging from barbarism, they turned to ancient Rome for their educational model. Technology - such as it was - could be learnt 'on the job'; education was inherited book-learning, reserved for the religious elite which formed the first educated class. So the basis of all university education in the western world (not excluding, at a much later date, the Americas) became the Trivium (grammar, rhetoric, logic) and Quadrivium (arithmetic, geometry, music, astronomy), derived from late Roman educational practice. This was the famous arts course which - though greatly changing in detail - dominated Western Europe in concept right down to the end of the eighteenth century. Authority, book-learning, verbal communication were the key-notes; learning from observation and experiment, training in manual skills, and the application of principles to practical purposes - these played only a small part in universities. Technology has no place in the traditional higher education.

The great break-out from this traditional framework did not really come until the nineteenth century, although long before there had been prophets, such as Francis Bacon and Thomas Gresham, with schemes for teaching the sciences and for applying knowledge of all kinds to the needs of society. The nineteenth century saw in Britain, on the one hand, the birth of the civic universities and institutions of higher technology, and, on the other, the proliferation of scientific courses which ranged all the way from the most pure to the most applied. The concept of the specialised honour school fragmented learning. In the twentieth century all kinds of new, sometimes curious, courses have knocked at the doors of higher education and gained admission. Once the gates were opened to more than the three traditional courses of professional training - law, medicine, theology - courses in applied knowledge of all kinds proliferated. Any sense of structure has disappeared and as for the seven liberal arts, they have long since been buried. Perhaps their memory lingers only in the quaint fact that the first degree in Oxford for all courses is still the BA, and in the grim determination with which in the USA they hang on to the appellation College of Liberal Arts and Sciences.

If 'national policy' in terms of content implies a desire to recover some coherent principle in the curricula of higher education, could we possibly return to some such concept as the medieval one, and formulate a new Trivium and Quadrivium? I think obviously not. No national policy in that sense is possible or desirable. There is no longer at the higher education level a single set of skills or a common body of knowledge which all students ought to acquire. Building up from the nineteenth century to the present day there has developed a great emphasis on applied knowledge, on education for the job. Should we then accept that we have moved to the opposite extreme from the medieval concept and that our policy should be education to service the community in an increasingly differentiated set of jobs which necessitate an ever more fragmented

education? From a human point of view the most encouraging light in our skies is the growing realisation that to live and cope in the fluid situations of this age requires the qualities of the man over and above those of the expert. After all, there is something at the back of the concept of humane letters as the foundation of higher education. Without seeking to attack the specialised training of the expert, we may still ask ourselves: what are the common elements which we ought to embody in the education of the next generation of young men and women? I shall suggest five, formulating them in terms of activities and experiences, rather than bodies of knowledge. I shall keep mainly, but not entirely, within the intellectual sphere but I have chosen the word 'experience' deliberately to remind us that non-intellectual factors enter continually into academic activities. My five are not, of course, intended to be exhaustive.

I put first the need to communicate and therefore to learn the arts of communication. Perhaps it was a profound instinct about the basis of human civilisation which made early medieval scholars wrestle first with precision (grammar), clarity (logic) and eloquence (rhetoric) in the use of words. Good communication is still the sine qua non of all human activities, except the solitary ones. The tradition of verbal communication as the chief medium for civilised men is still strong, although other 'languages' of mathematics and sciences, invented long ago, are now of ever increasing importance. Have we reached a point where verbal communication must decline, while picture language directs everyday matters and experts talk to each other more and more in their own specialised languages? This is not a fanciful question. I believe a real decision has to be made here. I think we should all agree that the civilisation we want is a sharing of knowledge and experience right across the board, a sharing on the level of common human intelligence, not particular expertise. Is it just tradition which makes it seem impossible to envisage any other common language of the intellect than that of words? Or is it that the language of words was developed to its full capacity precisely to meet this human need of sharing broadly that which might otherwise have been confined to an esoteric circle? At any rate, I put forward for consideration the proposition that in the intricacies and confusions of a modern mass society, verbal communication must do at least one part of the job of making and keeping relationships fully human. Its intellectual function is primarily to make complexities intelligible and their consequences reasonable. Thus it is of paramount importance that all students should be trained to use this common language with precision and care, as well as whatever other expert 'language' they may have to acquire. In the relationships of modern life it is a pretty sophisticated form of language that is called for. Clarity in organising intricate bodies of fact, sharpness of analysis, precision in argument - all depend ultimately on good training in the use of words. Moreover students need to be alerted to the power of words and the responsibility which rests on those who have been trained to use them with facility. The expert who befogs his clientele, the politician who beguiles with specious and woolly generalities, the journalist or writer who beclouds the issue by using loaded words, these may be cited as representative of a much wider range of abuse of power in communication. Verbal language, of course, conveys emotion as well as intellectual statement - and to this I shall return later - but I am concerned here with the practical need to maintain community relations on the basis of clear, common discourse and the education necessary for this. A human society today must be one in which a large number of people understand the use and abuse of language and the most highly educated have

learnt to use this tool responsibly.

Secondly, the demands of life today place a high value on techniques of mastery. This hardly needs arguing. From the moment when, as infants, we start wrestling with door-knobs in order to get where we want, a large part of our education consists in learning to master things and situations in order that we can establish a degree of control over our environment. (In passing, the effects of an environment so full of gadgets to be mastered on child-attitudes is worth a thought.) At the higher end of education learning mastery - both in physical and intellectual contexts - becomes ever more complex and all-absorbing. There are in general certain clear educational processes involved in learning mastery: the acquisition of essential skills such as learning a foreign language or handling a tool; the assembly of data; the criticism of past authorities; the analysis of material into component parts; its categorisation and re-ordering; finally, the formulation for oneself of conclusions to be drawn. Throughout runs the necessary moral experience of sustained effort for comprehended ends. Some such experience as this is common right across the board from pure scientific studies through technological and social studies to the humanities and speculative philosophy. Learning authorities for ends not fully comprehended may seem a cheap short cut, but achieving some degree of mastery for oneself is a vital experience today, although this must obviously be at different levels of competence according to capacity. It is necessary for the growth of a person: inability to cope is one of the pathetic personal failures today. It is equally necessary for the community to be serviced by people who are 'masters of their craft'.

Mastery has to be learnt in particular contexts: one does not master tools, information or situations in general. This is the justification for well-structured courses with some work in depth, rather than loose and superficial agglomerations of knowledge. But the problem today, as we all know, is how mastery learnt in one field can be later adapted to changing conditions or even to use in a new field. I think the clue lies in the extent to which we, as teachers, present the whole process as a training in method based on clear principles. Broadly speaking, I believe in the transferability of a trained approach to problems which bear some relation in quality to those already studied. Thus, for instance, the experience of sifting data and clarifying opposed arguments which is part of historical method can help to make a good committee member in, say, local government at a later stage. The answer to our problem of how to educate people for changing functions is not necessarily more general education, but the relation of an experience of gaining some mastery in one field to general principles of method which have a wider application.

If the acquisition of mastery - in some degree - is a necessary ingredient in education today, quite as essential is a critical examination of the function of mastering things and people in our society. How far in a mass society must people be treated like things and mastered by the same techniques? What are the limits, if any, to manipulating them for ends outside themselves? Do we live too much in tool-situations? Above all, what are the dangers of power and how can one provide safeguards against the damaging effects of lust for power, both on those who exercise it and those who suffer it? These are largely moral questions, but not, therefore, to be excluded from education. On the contrary, learning techniques of mastery requires a balancing element of critical scrutiny, an examination of the roles which those with expertise must play in society, and their dangers.

Anyone who has attended so far to this paper may now be in revolt. Am I not over-emphasising the mastery of tools? What deserts are here envisaged in which human understanding withers and dies because the relationships of master and tool take over? But of course the competence our society demands is only a means to an end - the end of personal living. The nourishment of persons is drawn to a large degree from shared human experience and thus the third essential element in higher education is to enlarge and enrich understanding and enjoyment of other human beings. This, of course, is partly 'instant', that is, through immediate contact with people in our present (and the sparks which ought to be flying between people in any educating community are vital ones), but- if we may define history as recorded human experience up to the present - a large part of this education, even for scientists, must be 'historical.' Drawn from whatever source, the riches of past human experience form a grand study, calling forth sympathetic imagination in the effort needed to stand in other people's shoes, yet startling us by the 'experience of difference', from which we return to view ourselves and our situation in a new light. It widens our vision of human capabilities - the heights to which men can rise, the depths to which they can fall - and it brings us within the dimensions of tragedy and pathos, of irony and humour. Whether this experience be approached through the sciences, through literature and the arts, or through the subject commonly called history, it places the problem of present living in a perspective which young people growing to maturity need. Without it their search for identity can peter out in a two-dimensional cardboard kind of existence. Set in the long perspective and infinite variety of human experience human beings can draw nourishment from their past.

My fourth point is difficult to formulate. It is the experience of apprehension in wholeness which we all need to balance our strivings after mastery. The chief technique used in the process of mastering something is the analytical, but knowledge gained through dividing into bits gives only a limited understanding unless combined with an attempt to grasp the independent reality of the thing or person you propose to dissect. Indeed, it may be said that analysis will not be fruitful without the intuitive understanding which springs from a contemplation of the whole. Yet our education today, particularly at the higher stage, is overwhelmingly analytical - in arts as well as sciences. Great scientists, masters of the analytical method, sometimes express a personal response, at once intellectual and emotional, to the total being of what they study, in terms of awe, wonder and delight, yet students in laboratories get little encouragement to express such feelings. Analysis is a good servant, but a bad master, and we are often in danger of killing at birth those spontaneous responses which all the marvels in the world of nature, as well as of persons, should call forth. To put the knife into a natural specimen or a historical character without some apprehension of its or his beauty, intricacy or mystery impoverishes our whole response to life. So my plea is that we should kindle and cherish the flame of an artist's approach to knowledge. The corollary of this is that we must recognise the validity of what I will call creative response in the learner. Are there some courses so limited in scope that the end-product can only be the regurgitation of book-work? I doubt it. In any case creative response takes many forms which escape the examination strait-jacket. We can foster intellectual excitement, imaginative understanding, the authentic expression of wonder and attempts at personal evaluation. We can set problems - whether mathematical, literary, historical or whatever - which require perception and elegance in their solution. Above all, we can

determine not to quench by cynicism the smoking flax of some genuine personal response. For we must not lose in our society the capacity for a wide range of response and its communication in whatever 'language'- of the arts, of literature or of the sciences - is appropriate.

Lastly, students - particularly those on the last stage of preparation for full social responsibility - need to order their own experience and to formulate their own objectives and commitments. The very fact of the wide range of intellectual and emotional experiences pouring in on them, often in concentrated form, makes pressing the need to stand back and consider what is happening to you, to form a personal system of values, to find out what you believe in and where you mean to place your loyalties. So opportunity must be found for this kind of ordering and assessing. The stimulus to do it may come from a lecturer's 'aside' or a tutor's 'irrelevance' - both probably unnecessary to the syllabus but vital to the student; it may be given in a seminar or discussion group deliberately set up to look critically at one's own education. The essential point is that values and value judgements are implicit in all academic education and ought at some stage to be made explicit. But whose values? Here we touch the most sensitive point of all. Students must of necessity come into an already existing framework of values, whether the institution be a traditional university or a new polytechnic. Is it the aim of national policy to initiate them into an existing and unchanging set of national values? Even if we gave the answer Yes, we should not agree on what these are. In my view the answer cannot be Yes, for the future can never be the same as the past. To educate students for the future is not to define a set of objectives for them, but to help them find their own objectives in relation to those of the outgoing generation. I stress in relation to This is both essential and tricky: essential, because a revolutionary break in culture is usually disastrous; tricky, because the relationship can so easily become one of subtle pressure on the side of tradition. Ideally, academic teachers will be ready to interpret and make explicit the values for which they stand without seeking in any way to impose them. Ideally, students will seek to understand as well as to criticise and assess the values and objectives offered to them. In practice, the relationship between the generations will always contain tensions. Some will argue that there is no real freedom for students; that the 'establishment' always wins; that there is no alternative between conforming and dropping out. I cannot accept this. I believe we can provide a learning situation in which the present claims of the community to receive responsible service can be set side by side with searching critical scrutiny of its existing ends. The future servants of society must also be its changers.

It could be said that, broadly speaking, the first two of my five principles cater for national needs and the last three for personal. But national and personal are, of course, obverse and reverse of one coin. Persons need to be able to communicate clearly and to be masters of something, or at least as competent as they can be, in some field. Conversely, I believe societies need the more subtle qualities of sympathetic imagination, intuitive understanding and responsiveness, capacity for commitment to chosen ends. Just as national and personal needs cannot be separated, so 'work' and 'leisure' do not call for differentiated educational experiences. All my five experiences might be equally relevant to the job which we have to do and that which we choose to do. It is not specific 'education for leisure' that we need, but development of a person's range and capacity to seize a great variety of opportunities.

I come now to the practical questions of how to apply these five principles, both in terms of courses and methods. The point I have been trying to make throughout is that *all* students ought to get something of *all* these experiences, although in different proportions and with varying emphasis in different courses. The aim of good communication, for instance, should inform all courses, calling for more specific attention than heretofore to such matters as presentation of material, construction of argument, formulation of thought and judgement. If the language of words is to remain the common means of communication, then scientists need training in this, as well as in any special language of their own. Obviously all need to have more than one verbal language. Speaking and writing properly must be taught as two of the major arts of the citizen. The aim of mastery raises at once the controversy on courses in depth versus those in width. I would hold that every course should be organised to give the experience of work in depth somewhere, and by work in depth I mean not just more detailed information, but more opportunity to get behind the authorities and work out problems for oneself than is offered by the general survey course. (The degree of mastery, of course, is always relative to capacity.) The third point - broadening one's understanding of human experience - would seem at first sight to apply only to arts courses or to general courses in which arts and sciences are taken together. Here we touch the controversy between the merits of a closely structured course and one composed of a collection of separate units, even a free-for-all pick from the catalogue. It could be argued that my third aim (in contradiction to my second) gives a lead towards the latter. It is certainly true that we need to go on experimenting with 'foundation' and 'liberal studies' courses, with new combinations of scientific and humane studies, with attempts to redraw the map of knowledge and locate course boundaries in new places. We need wide ranges of choice, so that students can become aware of unimagined possibilities. We need experiment with problem-centred structures or projects in which the students form the structural framework of their course for themselves out of their own experience. But all these experiments can be coherently planned, so that the various parts are organically related. There is room here for disagreement but, on balance, I favour table d'hote meals with wide choice, rather than a la carte ones - unless, of course, you go the whole way, have no menu, and require students to cook the meal themselves - a very worthwhile experience, provided it does not founder for lack of cooking materials. It should be remembered, however, that my third aim can also be accommodated within traditional specialised courses, for every tract of knowledge, every science, has its own rich history, a heritage of human discovery and endeavour. The recent upsurge of interest in the history of science and technology testifies to its significance for students. By many different means this element can be woven into our courses, not forgetting the many informal ways in which exploration of human experience can be encouraged.

My fourth and fifth points find expression not so much in curriculum policies as in teaching methods and the provision of informal opportunities. They must find embodiment - in varying degrees - in all courses: response to beauty is not confined to art students, nor philosophising about experience to philosophy students. There is a case to be made for deliberately planning in the construction of some courses (certainly in history and literature) to balance analytical work by artistic appreciation. There is also a strong case for including in every course an exercise in criticising and appraising the aims and achievements of the course itself, so that students may be encouraged to set about reflecting on their own

experience. But in the main these desiderata need not necessarily be sought through curriculum reform. It is through the impact of teaching that artistic delight is communicated and creative response encouraged. It is through the cut and thrust of argument and discussion that evaluation of experience takes place.

So we come to the old well-tried point that personal methods in teaching and a wide range of informal contact and activity are at the heart of the whole matter. Some of what I have asked for can be - and is - done brilliantly by gifted lecturing to mass audiences but a great deal can really be achieved only through personal contacts with small groups. Developing the power to write requires individual tutorial attention, and at the other end of my list, critical assessment of experience is the product of close discussion. Yet staffing ratios go up, and to ask for teaching in tutorials or even in small seminars, seems crying for the moon. If however we believed as much in the spark which can be generated only by personal teaching, as we do in the electric quality of great lecturing, we might go boldly for the best of all worlds, that is to say, use all the resources of the mass media to get the lecturing function covered by a small number of 'top' academics, and redeploy the average academic teaching body in this fundamentally important work of personal teaching in small groups. As for the informal education which ought to be an integral part of a student's learning experience, this constitutes a demand for facilities, and therefore for money, which is not at present adequately met in many institutions; yet another claim on the time of academic teachers; recognition on the part of authorities that a vital part of a student's education, particularly in his artistic and philosophising activities, lies in this fruitful combination of work and play.

Have I been talking about the education of an elite or mass higher education? The answer is: both. But with the proviso that I am distinguishing higher from general adult education. The distinguishing marks of a higher education course are, in my view, its coherence as a structure, its relation of skills to the theoretical body of knowledge on which they depend, its requirement of sustained thought and study over a considerable period (including for some 'sandwich time'). We should, I believe, demand in higher education a standard of effort and rigour which would not be appropriate in adult education as a whole. But I still see a great range of standards possible within higher education itself. If at one end of our swimming pool we keep our high-jumping divers on their specialised courses, there is room at the other end for all sorts of fish willing to take on the discipline of learning to swim. Rigour at either end means a very different thing, but both ends must have it, and - as I have tried to show - our broad objectives should be the same. As for standards, external ones must, I believe, remain clearly differentiated, since the community needs the assurance that people really have the competence their bits of paper proclaim, and also because the hard fact of differentiation in ability and performance forms a salutary part of personal education. But I think we should concern ourselves much more with internal standards, with enabling individual students to stretch themselves to full capacity and to assess their own progress. This means more flexibility and experiment in methods of assessment.

Our main concern is the education of the uprising generation, though the re-education of older generations becomes increasingly important. The transmission of the past, the servicing of the present and the creation of the future all enter into this process. Above all, we must aim at

balancing the past and the future. In their role as transmitters of the past, teachers have to be witnesses, not persuaders; in their role as providers for the present, they must insist on competence, even in the would-be changers of society; in their role as educators for the future, they can rightly be searching critics of students' objectives and plans, but never cynics.

An International View of Higher Education

Ladislav Cerych

Can an international view of higher education help to clarify the discussion of a topic such as the definition of the national purpose for higher education in a specific country? And assuming it can, what are its implications for the present situation?

These are the two questions which this paper will attempt to answer before posing a third more practical problem: do the actual political and economic developments - in particular the entry of the UK into the European Community - lead not only to the strengthening of an international view of higher education but inevitably also to what might be called internationalisation (or europeanisation) of British higher education? The main source of information and of conclusions drawn in this paper is the author's experience and connections with the higher education programme of OECD and his more recent associations with the programme of comparative studies in higher education launched by the International Council for Educational Development, New York.

I THE USEFULNESS OF AN INTERNATIONAL VIEW

Antoine Julien, Victor Cousin, Horace Mann, William T Harris, are just a few names of the early period of comparative education. Michael Sadler, Wilhelm Dilthey, P E Levasseur, belong to the later generation which opened the way to the more recent work of Isaac Kandel, Nicholas Hans, Pedro Rosello, Robert Ulich, Georges Bereday, Thorsten Husen, W R Niblett and others. Finally, the most contemporary work of Harold J Noah, Max A Eckstein, Philip Foster, C Arnold Anderson, and other authors connected with the Comparative Education Review, constitutes a bridge between the old discipline of comparative education and those who approached various problems of education from the point of view of their respective social sciences: Friedrich Edding, John Vaizey, Edward F Denison, Theodor Schulz, Frederick Harbison, among the economists; Amitai Etzioni, S N Eisenstadt, Joseph Ben-David, David McClelland, Martin Trow and A H Halsey, among the sociologists; Seymour Martin Lipset and Gabriel A Almond among the political scientists etc.

Most of these authors do not deal specifically or exclusively with higher education but with education at all levels. However their work represents the different types of orientations and aims of comparative studies in higher education. They can be grouped under three categories:
1) borrowing 2) generating political pressure 3) better understanding one's own system.

1) Borrowing

Noah and Eckstein[1] consider educational borrowing as the main rationale of the early stages in the development of comparative education. For the policy maker and planner this rationale remains more or less powerful

practically at any stage of history and in respect to higher education as much as with regards to other educational levels. Examples of the past are well known and do not need to be discussed here. As soon as the need for reform is felt sufficiently, the search for 'foreign models' constitutes a natural tendency of almost any government and social group. And as the need for reform today is quasi-universal, to look at foreign solutions and experiences, considering both their achievements and failures, is a highly desirable approach which most of the politicians and planners indeed have followed at least in part. Almost all of the recent major national reforms of higher education in Europe were preceded by missions to other countries to collect information on 'how things were done elsewhere', and reports of these missions appeared as integral parts of reform proposals (eg the special international annex to the Robbins Report).

Descriptions and analyses of foreign solutions, to be really useful in order to learn 'what to do and what not to do', are effective only under certain conditions which by themselves would deserve a careful study. If undertaken by specialists of the foreign country, these descriptions and analyses will often put emphasis on points and problems highly relevant in the respective country, but of little importance for the potential borrower; moreover, they might omit to stress - because they take them for granted - those aspects which from the point of view of the borrower could constitute the true originality of the solution or which are the condicio sine qua non of its functioning. If, on the contrary, the descriptions are done by nationals of the receiving country, they might represent a superficial re-translation of the foreign experience in national terms, thus missing the true dynamics of this experience. Ideally, only a person with perfect understanding of the two systems and of their historical and political context should be asked to present the foreign experience to national policy makers: in practice, at least, a certain number of basic rules should be followed which are precisely those of comparative higher education.

2) Creating political pressure

This aspect of the relevance of comparative studies in higher education is not widely, and certainly not officially, acknowledged although it is far from negligible. The phenomenon can be observed in many other fields both on the national level and on the level of institutions and social groups. When a comparative account of achievements and developments of all kinds is presented, even if its purpose is a purely academic or analytical one, such an account will often have a psychological impact on the countries, institutions or groups concerned. Thus, if a particular country appears in an international table comparing higher education enrolment ratios at the bottom of the list while its GNP per capita ranks it rather high, this simple fact will ultimately contribute to create a pressure for policies facilitating the growth of enrolment.

A similar effect might be produced by a comparative table showing the proportions of students from lower income families in universities, by a table giving the amounts of public funds spent per student or the percentage of GNP spent on higher education. In most cases, the first reaction of the country (or institution) concerned will be a rather negative one, either putting in doubt the data presented by the authors of the international comparison or, more often, criticising them for not understanding or misinterpreting the respective national systems. However,

provided that the information is backed by solid evidence and that the main principles of comparative studies have been followed, the more or less unfavourable international comparison will be taken up sooner or later by public opinion - in particular the journals and the press - as well as the planners and policy makers themselves. This will eventually either contribute to the formulation of new policy measures or at least help in a better understanding of the factors which make the particular country appear 'at the bottom of the international table'. Many examples of this process could be quoted. Thus the comparative work of Friedrich Edding has undoubtedly great impact on policy making in Germany; several countries and curriculum planners were deeply disturbed by the findings of the International Study of Achievements in Mathematics, and many of the comparative studies published by international organizations became important points of reference in defining national targets. The latter type of influence of comparative studies can be considered to reach beyond the mere creation of political pressures; in this sense, these studies become, in fact, an important factor of the process of goal setting. Of course, no country will plan its future higher education enrolment solely to match a ratio achieved elsewhere nor will it project the creation of institutions of a certain type because such institutions exist somewhere abroad. But certainly the mere existence of higher ratios or of particular institutions in other countries provides additional credibility and rationality to the national plan or projection and thus greater chances of implementation.

The argument can be made that this process of goal setting by implicit or explicit reference to foreign achievements or situations, in the same way as borrowing of foreign solutions, has always taken place and will continue to take place with or without comparative studies. However, if this is so, comparative studies are even more justified because they alone can contribute to the rationality of these processes, that is, to the elimination or attenuation of a process of goal setting and selective borrowing based principally on generally arbitrary fluctuations of different innovation trends.

3) Better understanding of one's own system

The relevance of comparative studies in higher education as an analytical tool applies to policy formation as much as it does from the point of view of research in general. Even if policy makers and planners have no intention whatsoever to adopt or to adapt foreign models, a comparative approach throws significant light on the really basic forces which foster or resist innovation and on the mechanisms which command and explain beyond the purely national circumstances, the behaviour and problems of almost any higher education system in the socio-economic context of the last third of the twentieth century.

This can be clearly, if only indirectly, demonstrated by a number of examples drawn from the practical experience of the author.

Thus, comparative study of two or three year non-university institutions of post-secondary education attempting to provide terminal vocational education and/or the first years of university studies[2] has shown that in almost all countries these institutions suffer from a lack of status which usually was attributed to particular national or local circumstances. By isolating and controlling several variables the comparative analysis

demonstrated the existence of deeper factors and interrelationships which have to be influenced by policy measures for any more permanent change to occur. The fact that, say, a British polytechnic encounters a number of almost identical problems to an American community college, in spite of all the differences which separate these two types of institutions, was not only intellectually revealing, it also pointed out more clearly than any purely British or American study the leverage points where action could or should be taken.

Another example might be taken from the comparative study of enrolment growths in higher education. The conclusions of such a study[3] demonstrate, among other things, that during the past 20 years there was practically no correlation between rates of economic development and the rates of expansions of higher education, and that in general higher education systems responded very poorly, if at all, to those policy measures tending to orient students towards types and fields of study presumed to correspond to priority areas of manpower needs. Through purely national studies it would be very difficult to establish why the policy measures taken were inadequate and to unveil the complexity or the relationship between economic growth and the growth of higher education. Again, a comparative analysis does throw some light on these questions mainly because it permits the isolation at least conceptually of some strategic variables and the observations of their impact.

Comparative studies are also highly relevant for determining the relative advantages and drawbacks of the three well-known methods of planning of higher education: the social demand approach, the manpower approach, and the cost-benefit approach; and of the conditions which make one approach or in particular a combination of approaches, more or less effective and operational. National studies alone tend to attribute the good or poor results of each of these methods either to their purely methodological aspects or to specific political circumstances of the country concerned. In an international comparative perspective it becomes much clearer which factors and features of the higher education system constitute the real bottlenecks for the practical use of these methods. To summarize the argument in favour of comparative studies as a tool for better understanding of one's own system it could possibly be said that this tool is one of the very few which allow one to identify a certain number of strategic parameters and to test, at least partially, their behaviour under different stresses, socio-economic and educational configurations, before costly and eventually inefficient policy measures are taken.

This thesis is illustrated very well not only by the different reports of international organisations but also by the most penetrating nature of studies on higher education published in the past years by such authors as Ashby, Halsey and Trow, Ben-David, McConnell and others, who all analyse one particular system of higher education by comparing it explicitly to one or several others.

Thus the answer to our first question - whether an international view of higher education can help to clarify the discussion of a topic such as the national purpose for higher education in a specific country - is most affirmative.

II INTERNATIONAL TRENDS AND THE BRITISH SITUATION

Several of the examples given earlier point to a rather obvious first conclusion: some of the key issues of British higher education correspond

clearly to issues found more or less everywhere (eg the rapid growth of enrolments, the split of the system into a noble and 'less noble' sector). And this applies to the central topic of the present conference, " a national purpose for British higher education". Practically all countries are searching for what the sociologists would call a new goals structure of higher education, and everywhere this search implies not only a definition of the new purposes but also the overcoming of apparent or real incompatibilities which they generate.

To the extent that it remains relatively general, the definition of the new goals structure of higher education does not seem too difficult. In addition to traditional function of teaching and research, emphasis is put more and more on the public service function of higher education and its different implications: participation in regional development, providing of adult and part-time education, contribution (through teaching, research and direct involvement) to the solution of some major social problems such as those connected with environment or urban development. American universities clearly advanced their public service function in the 19th Century and it now constitutes one of the main characteristics of the American system. There, the question is not how to add a new type of purpose to higher education but how to adapt the traditional role of land grant colleges to the modern extent of an industrial or post-industrial society [4]. On the contrary, for practically all of the continental European countries the public service function of universities implies an almost completely new concept.

British higher education considered as a whole seems to stand in the middle of this spectrum. Its tradition of extra-mural activities, the close relations between non-university post-secondary institutions and local authorities and, more recently, the Open University - all these are potentials for a possible expansion of the public service function; while some other developments tend in an opposite direction: a decline in part-time studies and in sandwich courses both in the former CATs and in the polytechnics, the tendency among the latter to resemble as much as possible elite universities.

The search for a new national purpose for higher education is of course a much broader problem than defining and developing the public service function, however important this new purpose might be. The new goal structure will reflect, and have impact on, practically all aspects of higher education: its curriculum content, its institutional framework its planning, its degree structure, its admission criteria, etc. There is no doubt that in respect to most of these aspects British trends can be compared usefully to trends in other countries. A comparative analysis probably also can show the forces underlying these trends and the nature of the tensions and obstacles which they produce.

Among the main underlying forces, let us cite four:

a) the need for diversity and diversification (due to the diversity of the vastly enlarged student population and to the variety of socio-economic needs);
b) the need for the opening of the system with regard to access conditions as well as to mobility between different parts of the system (resulting primarily from the political and social pressure for greater equality of educational opportunity);
c) the need for a system of lifelong education (resulting also from the pressure for greater equality of educational opportunity as

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c) the need for a system of lifelong education (resulting also from the pressure for greater equality of educational opportunity as

well as from the nature and speed of scientific and technological progress);

d) the need for greater efficiency (connected with a number of causes such as prevailing financial constraints, certain public disenchantment with higher education, and the large wastage rates of all kinds).

Practically all countries are trying to respond to these needs and 'operational objectives' and of course, so is Great Britain. In several respects her situation seems - at least to an outside observer - relatively favourable. The British higher education system, when considered as a whole, is probably more diversified than any other, certainly in Western Europe [5]. This applies not only to the institutional spectrum but also to educational patterns, modes of attendance, curriculum offerings and methods of instruction. The British system has several characteristics which should facilitate the development of life-long education (eg the tradition of external degrees, of part-time studies and sandwich courses, and of course the Open University). The British system is probably also more efficient than any other; the wastage rates are low (even in polytechnics) when compared with French or Italian Universities and the average duration of studies is short. As far as the opening of the British system is concerned, the situation does not seem worse, although it might not seem better than in most of Western Europe in regard to access conditions. However, there appears to be very little opening within the system, that is in respect to mobility between its different parts. The binary (or 'trinary') nature of the system contributes certainly to its diversification and probably also to its innovative potential, but it has so far prevented almost any flow between its two main segments (which undoubtedly contributes to the existing inequalities of educational opportunity) as well as any effective co-ordination or planning of the system as a whole.

The British system of higher education is subject to a number of major tensions more or less common to all countries entering the stage of mass higher education:

- tension between the requirements of excellence and of egalitarianism
- tension between the structure and size of individual demands for higher education and the structure and size of labour market requirements
- tension between the aspirations and interests of the different groups and individuals involved in higher education
- tension between the aspirations and expectations of individuals and the prevailing socio-economic constraints in terms of resource of availability, academic attitudes, institutional hierarchies, established cultural and social value structures striving for self perpetuation.

As in other areas of social life, such tensions are not necessarily destructive per se. In fact, their existence and the continuous interplay of the respective opposing or contradictory forces might represent an indispensable condition of progress. This however will depend on the capacities of the post-secondary systems concerned to accommodate them, that is to provide for structural and other mechanisms and procedures which will allow these tensions to lead to a succession of positive responses and compensatory measures rather than to a paralysis in the functioning of the system.

Does the British system of post-secondary education have a capacity to absorb tensions to a greater or lesser degree than systems of other countries? The answer to this question seems again to an outside observer relatively favourable. There can be little doubt that the British system coped with the pressure of numbers in a more imaginative way than the majority of continental European countries. It not only expanded the traditional institutions but created on a large scale new forms of higher education and, in fact, new structures, which seem to accommodate relatively better than elsewhere most of the tensions mentioned above. But once more, the lack of communications, of co-ordination and mobility between the two main sectors of the system appear to be important obstacles to really satisfactory solutions.

Often the latter problem is related to the issue of binary versus comprehensive organisation of higher education. And in this respect too an international comparison might lead to significant conclusions. It appears indeed that this issue arises practically everywhere[6] even if the term binary system is usually applied exclusively to the British situation. And a comparative analysis will show that a comprehensive system per se is neither better nor worse than a binary one (and vice versa), and that the real problem is not the choice between one or the other but the way in which their relations will be organised, whether they will be more or less isolated from each other, or whether they will be closely linked by a rational division of labour and by a system of transfers in both directions (of students, of teachers, of resources, of experiences). And it appears clearly that linkages between different patterns and levels of education may be lacking not only in a binary system but also in a comprehensive one, the split and separations occurring not between two sectors of the system but within single so called comprehensive institutions (eg American community colleges or the Canadian CEGEPs).

III TOWARDS A 'EUROPEANISATION' OF BRITISH HIGHER EDUCATION?

Beyond the problem of the usefulness and relevance of an international and comparative analysis of specific national higher education systems lies the problem of actual internationalisation of these systems. Clearly, such an internationalisation is and, more and more, will be taking place for the simple reason that the major problems are common to all or several countries, because of the closer relations - in terms of both formal and informal communications - between them. This will lead and already leads to an increase in the mutual borrowing of different 'national models' and to the spread of particularly successful or attractive solutions. The comparative approach will certainly contribute to this process as will, implicitly or explicitly, the activities and contacts within international organizations such as OECD, the Council of Europe, or UNESCO. However, whether the membership of a country in one of these organizations automatically implies the change of its system according to some common patterns is a completely different question. And this is true also of the British entry into the European Community.

There is, in our opinion, no reason whatsoever to assume that the British membership in the Common Market will lead or even push British higher education to any major changes. At least two important and determining considerations can be made in support of this rather categorical statement.

Firstly, the Treaty of Rome does not provide the European Community with

any supranational competences regarding education, even if several parts of the Treaty have more or less direct implications in this respect. This is true especially with regard to Chapter 2 and Article 57 which concern the mobility of professions within the Community and those measures necessary to achieve it including the mutual recognition of degrees and various diplomas. At one point the result of these sections was a report proposing a harmonisation of lengths of studies for certain professions. In practice these proposals were never adopted and it has been recognised in the meantime that such mechanistic and imperative measures are totally inapplicable, and that all harmonisation of educational contents and structures must be based on a voluntary co-operation. It even appears that major international educational efforts concerning the nine member countries of the Community in the forseeable future will take place within a purely inter-governmental framework and not under the auspices of the Commission[7].

Secondly, it must be remembered that none of the continental higher education systems is in a situation which could provide a successful model for all the others. If, during the past fifteen years, any system has exercised a major influence in Europe, it is the British one; it seems to a neutral outside observer almost unbelievable that anyone in Britain could be afraid of a loss of identity of English higher education because of formal or informal measures taken by the European Community or under the impact of continental models of higher education.

The absence of any major or direct influence of the membership in the European Community on the different higher education systems can best be shown by the available practical evidence. For better or worse, none of the systems of the original six members has been modified in the least as a result of a fifteen year long participation of these countries in the Common Market or, a fortiori, in response to any decision taken in Brussels[8].

There is certainly the future inevitability of more and more common solutions to different higher education problems, but these solutions will draw on a mutual exchange of experiences, which can and should be facilitated by the European Community, and on their voluntary or spontaneous acceptance (or they will simply not come into being at all). And it seems reasonable to predict, on the basis of considerations made earlier in this paper and of practical evidence of the past decade, that in this process of elaboration of common solutions the British experience, traditions and recent innovations probably will carry more weight than any other in Europe.

REFERENCES

1) Harold Noah and Max Eckstein, Towards a Science of Comparative Education, New York, 1969.

2) See OECD: Towards New Structures of Post-Secondary Education - a Preliminary Statement of Issues, Paris 1971, Part II of the Report.

3) OECD: Development of Higher Educ-tion 1950-1967, Analytical Report, Paris 1971.

4) Eg proposals for developing a kind of 'Urban Grant Collete' or a recent report of the Carnegie Commission "The Campus and the City"

5) Whether or not the British system is more diversified than the American can be argued. The multiplicity of US colleges and universities and the vast differences among them can probably not be matched by anybody. Yet the process of 'homogenisation' of American higher education identified by several authors and reports (Carnegie, Newman) points in an opposite direction.

6) See OECD: Towards New Structures of Post-Secondary Education Paris 1971, and L Cerych and D Furth 'The Search for a Global System - Unity and Diversity of Post-Secondary Education' in The World Year Book of Education 1971/72 - Evans Brothers, London.

7) This is already the case of the European University Institute in Florence.

8) No doubt some Europeans regret this situation, pointing to the total inefficiency of the European Community in helping to change their higher education systems.